CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.814
11 February 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 11 February 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Grey (United States of America)

GE.99-60636 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 814th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to welcome the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus, His Excellency Ambassador Sergei Martynov, who will be the first speaker this morning. I also have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of China and Italy.

I invite the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus, His Excellency Ambassador Sergei Martynov, to make his statement.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Belarus): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on your skilful presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and by wishing you further success in fulfilling your mandate. My delegation, as always, assures you of our fullest cooperation. I would also like to thank your predecessors, Ambassador Maimeskul of Ukraine and Ambassador Soutar of the United Kingdom, for their energetic and effective efforts. I am taking this opportunity to warmly welcome the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, and his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, who are providing very valuable support to the Conference.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus attaches particular importance to the issues of strengthening European and international security, the basic element of which is regional and global disarmament measures. In this context the role of the Conference as a unique multilateral disarmament negotiating body is absolutely crucial. Belarus highly values the impressive progress which has been made by the Conference in past years. I am convinced that we can still expect from this forum the same effective work and the same responsible approach. The previously gained experience can be successfully used as a powerful gear in reaching new goals.

Today, at the beginning of the new session, I would present the position of my Government on current disarmament and security issues. As you are all aware, Belarus severely suffered from the disastrous effects of the biggest technogenic catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Hence our extremely sensitive and responsible approach to all nuclear issues, including nuclear disarmament issues. However, from an unbiased analysis, we see that in the present geopolitical conditions, a step-by-step approach towards the elimination of all nuclear arsenals is the only productive one. We are convinced that only by steering clear of maximalism can we eventually reach this commonly desired goal. From our point of view, the next two steps in this direction could be the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and the development of international law on assurances for the non-nuclear-weapon countries against the use or threat of use of nuclear force. The following is the summary of my Government's considerations on these two big issues.

The scope of the "cut-off" convention should not only be limited to future production, it should strictly account for the available stockpiles of

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fissile material. The treaty must stipulate effective verification mechanisms to provide the highest assurances that no fissile material is weaponized by the States parties. In our view, IAEA could be the most suitable entity for "cut-off" verification purposes. It is most important to have a fair and well-balanced universal and non-discriminatory document satisfying the interests of individual States and groups of States.

Belarus has adhered to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and fully implemented all its obligations under START-1. By this, Belarus has cleaned up its soil from nuclear weapons. We believe that having renounced the available nuclear force, Belarus can only secure the national interests of protecting its independence, sovereignty and integrity by irrevocable and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of any force, including nuclear force.

We share the view expressed by most delegations about the necessity for re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Our position on that comprises the following key elements: negative assurances are a significant element in strengthening nuclear non-proliferation; as a result of the negotiations we must have an international legally binding document; the future agreement must not have any preconditions; the core of the agreement should be, wherever possible, enhanced by bilateral obligations; the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones must continue; and security assurances must be given to those non-nuclear-weapon States which clearly and unconditionally commit themselves not to use, not to acquire, and not to deploy nuclear weapons.

The efforts made by different countries in this direction, in our view, should be enhanced on both regional and global levels. In recent years the regional dimension has been strengthened by the creation and consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely reached within some regions of the world.

We realize that while the adoption of resolution 53/77 H, "Regional disarmament", by the United Nations General Assembly is a very positive contribution in this regard, we are not able to secure the non-nuclear-weapon status of Central and Eastern Europe without the full support of each and every country in the region and all nuclear Powers. The Government of Belarus takes this opportunity to thank all countries which cooperated and supported the resolution and to state its willingness to conduct further earnest consultations, including at the Conference on Disarmament, on this issue with those who did not find it possible to embrace the resolution. We anticipate that further progress on this complicated issue will be very much a function of the development of the security texture in Europe in the coming years. Therefore, and spurred by a panoply of other national interests, Belarus will strive to contribute its best to the joint efforts of all involved States to build a secure, undivided and stable Europe.

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The Republic of Belarus very positively considers the continuation of consultations and exchanges of views within the Conference on the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space. On the eve of the new millennium, hi-tech and space-exploring programmes create very real possibilities for the deployment of weapons in space. The general direction of space research should meet the interests of all, regardless of differences in the economic and scientific development of individual countries. It is necessary to continue and strengthen peaceful cooperation in space while leaving no changes for its militarization.

The conventional weapons issue is another disarmament priority of my Government. Last year, the world community gave much attention to the anti-personnel mines problem. Taking this opportunity, I would like to inform you that Belarus has ratified the second Protocol to the "Inhumane Weapons" Convention and declared, by Presidential decree, a moratorium on the transfer of any kind of mines. However, the important work of destroying those landmines which are to be modified in accordance with the Protocol is slowed down by the shortage of financial means and appropriate technologies. Belarus stands for a gradual, step-by-step prohibition of landmines. We are ready to actively participate in negotiations within the framework of the Conference on mines transfer.

Conventional weapons were used in all local and global conflicts this century. We are absolutely convinced of the necessity to develop in this forum new transparency measures with respect to conventional weapons. Openness and transparency in conventional weapons is a key factor for confidence and security-building. Without this, all global and regional "good will" in the field of security would not be effective enough.

The year 1999 could become a historic one with agreement on the adaptation of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and development of the Vienna Document. Belarus fully shares the view of some delegations at the Vienna negotiations about the need to finalize these documents which are crucially important for European security by the time of the OSCE summit in Istanbul. Meanwhile, the key provisions of the adapted CFE Treaty, in our view should be agreed upon before the NATO summit in Washington.

Our understanding is that the result of the current Vienna negotiations must be the enhanced security of all participating countries regardless of their membership in military and political blocks. The CFE Treaty proved to be a cornerstone of all-European security. However, the changed geopolitical situation, which still continues to change, requires a rather new content corresponding to old noble goals. In particular, some imbalance in military equipment and potential, which appeared as a result of political changes, must no longer exist in a new document. Besides, my country will be in a position to accept the adapted treaty if the expenditures related to its implementation are relevant to the economic potential of the countries involved. In the last few years Belarus, despite all its economic difficulties, was obliged to destroy some 10 per cent of all CFE-Treaty-limited equipment. Our appeals for

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international financial assistance have been overlooked. For this reason, the economic aspect of any international obligation is of the highest priority for my Government.

I would also like to briefly touch upon the reforming of the Conference, which appears quite important for the effectiveness and workability of this respected forum and its ability to meet new challenges.

We believe that the Conference will gain through a measured intake of new members who are eager to contribute to the world disarmament process. In this connection Belarus gives its full support to Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia in their desire to join the Conference and calls upon the other members to swiftly resolve this issue.

From our point of view, the 1998 session of the CD has shown the necessity of further improving some methods of work. Our confidence in the role of the Conference is still high. One could say that the Conference is going through a mid-life crisis. Belarus is sure that the Conference will come out of it with renewed vigour and acquired wisdom. We believe that last year a good job was done in this direction by Ambassador Illanes of Chile. This work should be continued at the current session. Regarding the Conference agenda, we believe that in future it could be reconsidered in a more realistic way.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me assure you and the Conference members that the Belarus delegation is prepared to diligently work on all agenda items. I would like to wish you success in achieving concrete results on the basis of the discussed programme of work, which, we all hope, could be adopted in the near future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Li Changhe.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD at the beginning of its 1999 session and express our appreciation for your efforts to facilitate an early start of substantive work in the CD this year. Our appreciation also goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Soutar of the United Kingdom, for his contribution to the work of the CD. May I also take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues, the Ambassadors of Colombia, Argentina, Slovakia, Sweden, Israel and Indonesia?

Today I would like to make a few comments on the CD's programme of work. The importance of the work of the CD - the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum - has been underscored by the international community. In 1998, with sustained efforts by all parties, the CD finally ended its stalemate. It began work on various items on its agenda and achieved some progress. We hope that, building upon the achievements of the past year, all parties can further demonstrate flexibility with a view to working out the programme of work for the current session of the CD at an early date and

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embarking on substantive work. In formulating such a programme the CD should take into account the current international situation, especially the latest developments in the field of disarmament, focusing on issues which have a direct bearing on international peace and security. At the same time we believe that such a programme should reflect and accommodate the aspirations and concerns of all parties.

The cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament is the first item on the CD's agenda and a top priority for the international community. China fully understands and endorses the proposals to establish appropriate working mechanisms in the CD, including an ad hoc committee to address the issue of nuclear disarmament. There are still different views regarding such mechanisms at the current stage. The Chinese delegation supports a joint effort by all parties to find an acceptable solution on the basis of a full exchange of views and establish appropriate mechanisms to work on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

China maintains that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices will be conducive to the prevention of nuclear proliferation and to nuclear disarmament. Last year the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on the FMCT. The Chinese delegation supports the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on the basis of the mandate contained in the Shannon report to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/75 L.

China has always maintained that it is entirely reasonable and justified for the large number of non-nuclear-weapon States to demand security assurances under which the nuclear-weapon States undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. The post-cold-war international situation provides new opportunities and possibilities for resolving the issue of NSA. The nuclear-weapon States should adopt a more positive attitude towards this issue rather than moving in the opposite direction while extending their strategies of nuclear deterrence. The Chinese delegation supports the re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on NSA to continue its substantive work on the basis of its work last year, with a view to concluding an international legal instrument on NSA.

The fifty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 53/76 by an overwhelming majority, inviting the CD again to re-establish the ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and recognizing the CD's primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. One hundred and sixty-five countries voted for the resolution and not a single country objected. This demonstrates the common aspiration and urgent demand of the international community to prevent an arms race in outer space. Last year I made a statement on the same subject in the CD plenary in which I mentioned a series of disturbing developments, indicating that the prevention of an arms race in outer space has become a relevant and

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urgent issue facing the international com nity. Recently some new developments have again raised grave conc ns. Here I am referring to the recent announcement of programmes to deve a national missile defence (NMD) system and a theatre missile defence (TMD) ystem as well as the intention to amend and even withdraw from the Anti-Ball tic Missile Treaty (the ABM).

The cold war ended 10 years ago and i ternational relations should move towards greater relaxation. Against such a background the above decisions run counter to the trends of the times. They are detrimental to the international efforts in arms control and disarmament and may even trigger a new round of the arms race, and will have a widespread and profound negative impact on the global and regional strategic balances in the next century. As is known to all, some of the above-mentioned missile defence systems are to be deployed entirely in outer space or targeted at objects in outer space. And some will be based in outer space to provide target information and guidance for ground-based weapon systems. The ultimate consequence will be to turn outer space into a new battlefield and a base for weapons systems. Moreover, it should be pointed out that, if any country insists on amending or even abolishing the ABM Treaty, thus having a free hand in developing and deploying such missile defence systems, it will certainly upset the global strategic balance and have a serious negative impact on the nuclear disarmament process. This cannot but raise great concern on the part of the international community and render the prevention of an arms race in outer space more relevant and urgent. As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum the CD should live up to its obligations and responsibilities to address this important issue before it is too late. We again urge the establishment of the ad hoc committee as soon as possible in order to negotiate legal instruments to prevent an arms race in outer space. Last year the Special Coordinator on this issue, Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka, pointed out in his progress report that there was no objection in principle to the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee, while further consultations would be needed as to the timing. We hope that all the CD members will demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility in order to re-establish the ad hoc committee as early as possible so as to begin the negotiations on the effective prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to the humanitarian concerns caused by landmines and is in favour of appropriate, reasonable and feasible restrictions on landmines, anti-personnel landmines in particular. In this connection, on 4 November 1998 the Chinese Government deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations its instrument of ratification of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The Chinese Government also attaches great importance to mine clearance and has actively supported and participated in international demining activities. China has contributed to the international fund for mine clearance and assisted the countries and international organizations concerned by providing training as well as relevant mine-clearance technologies and equipment. The Chinese delegation agrees to the reappointment of a special coordinator on the issue of anti-personnel landmines to build upon our work carried out last year.

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We are now close to a consensus on the expansion of CD membership. The Chinese delegation hopes that further efforts will be made to find a satisfactory solution in this regard. The Chinese delegation also agrees to the reappointment of the Special Coordinators to continue to explore the issues of expansion of CD membership, the improved and efficient functioning of the CD and the review of its agenda.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Balboni Acqua.

Mr. BALBONI ACQUA (Italy) (translated from French): Sir, as I take the floor for the first time under your leadership, I wish to congratulate you on my own behalf and on behalf of my delegation on taking up the post of President. I am very happy to see you leading this assembly because the international prestige of your country along with your recognized ability are fundamental conditions for leading our work with success. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the colleagues who have just arrived, in particular the Ambassadors of Colombia, Argentina, Slovakia, Sweden, Israel and Indonesia, and convey to them my best wishes for success during their assignments in Geneva.

Almost a month ago the Italian Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Patrizia Toia, speaking before the Conference, formulated an urgent request for the immediate re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. On that occasion, she emphasized that the intensification and the irreversibility of the nuclear disarmament process are objectives traditionally pursued by Italy, with a view to the final objective of the elimination of these weapons: "Italy will exercise vigilance and will not fail to associate itself, particularly in this forum, with the specific and realistic initiatives aimed at speeding up the implementation of the plan of action for disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation contained in the document on 'Principles and objectives' adopted by consensus in 1995".

For this reason my delegation thought it appropriate to submit, jointly with those of Germany, Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands, a proposal on nuclear disarmament which has been registered as an official document of the Conference with the symbol CD/1565. We share the opinions and comments contained in the statement made by the Ambassador of Belgium in introducing our initiative. We believe that the time has come to establish within the Conference a forum that will allow a regular and official exchange of information and views on nuclear issues. In voicing this wish, I would like to stress that we view the proposals that are designed to steer the Conference on Disarmament into multilateral negotiations for the reduction of nuclear weapons as unproductive. We are aware of the difficulties that lie ahead, but we think that the Conference could make rapid progress towards agreements of general interest and give a new impetus to the bilateral nuclear disarmament process that is under way so that it can be intensified and become irreversible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed the Chair. This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation with to take the floor? I see there are none. In that case, I would like to make a few remarks from the Chair.

I would like to make what hopefully will be my final remarks as President of the Conference. As the CD's first President this year, it has fallen to me to begin the task of starting our work for the 1999 session. Thanks to the cooperation of my predecessor, Ambassador Soutar, this task has fully occupied my time since early December. As you know, I have met with all CD delegations that made themselves available at least once, and many more than once, in addition to holding nine Presidential consultations. I am grateful to all delegations for meeting with me over the past several weeks and assisting in the effort to get the Conference to the point where we are now.

Unfortunately, that is nowhere as far as it should be. I began my presidency with a very basic and simple suggestion - to pick up where we left off last September. The advice of virtually everyone with whom I met was that this idea had the best chance of success. Therefore, I have continued to stick to it and have tabled a formal proposal to this end (CD/1566). I also decided to work together with my predecessor and successor as President to continue work on an informal basis on nuclear disarmament issues, as recommended by my predecessor, without prejudice to and pending adoption of whatever is eventually agreed to by the Conference regarding its work during the 1999 session. I also accelerated my bilateral meetings with delegations in an effort to begin our work in a timely manner.

I must now report to you that none of these efforts has yet succeeded. The several informal Presidential consultation meetings on nuclear disarmament that I held elicited no forward movement on this issue. The many bilateral meetings I have had, while privately encouraging, have yielded no public results. The CD has not even been able to agree yet on admitting five new members. I can only hope, therefore, that my successor, Ambassador Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela, will enjoy a greater measure of success in beginning our work, and I also hope that I have at least prepared the ground for his own efforts as President.

I need not remind the members of the Conference that what we do here or not do here will have an impact on the CD's credibility and standing, and certainly on its future. The CD has already wasted more than two years in an excess of rhetoric and dearth of negotiations.

We have now spent a month wrangling about whether or not to adopt a programme of work which would enable this year's session to begin where it left off in 1998. Very substantial efforts were required to agree on the 1998 work programme. But with accommodation on the part of all, we were able to reach such agreements.

(The President)

Ploughing over ground previously covered, making linkages and using procedural ploys to inch ahead on substantive issues where no consensus exists, will get us nowhere, and we all know it. Our job is to negotiate seriously and with dispatch on multilateral arms control issues where consensus exists. We all know that one issue meets these criteria and has for several years. That is the negotiation on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as endorsed by the entire international community - and by consensus - in United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/77. Therefore, I would like to make several parting observations.

We are not here just to talk. We are not here to resolve regional disputes which are beyond the competence of this Conference. We are not here to impugn the motives which cause members to take national positions. Nations do not adopt policies on these issues lightly. We ought to accept that and dispense with cheap shots, distorted views of treaty obligations and sarcastic rhetoric about other governments' motivations. Semantic overkill gets us nowhere. What we must do is to negotiate multilateral arms control agreements. That, at the end of the day, is the reason we are here.

If the CD fails to accept this basic responsibility, our publics and governments will draw the appropriate conclusion. The continued usefulness of the Conference will be judged not on what we say or how we say it, but on whether we have the collective good sense to negotiate seriously on multilateral arms control issues which are ripe for action and ready to be resolved. It is time to get down to work. The Romans got it right a long time ago. Factum non verbum - deeds not words. This should become our motto.

In conclusion, on behalf of the United States delegation and all the members and observers of the Conference, I wish to thank most sincerely the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, and all the other members of the secretariat for their dedicated, efficient and tireless support and advice. I can assure you that it has been most helpful and greatly appreciated. Similarly, I would like to thank the interpreters for their valuable and professional work. And finally, and personally, I would like to thank all delegations for the understanding and cooperation which they have extended to the Chair. I would also like to extend my thanks to the unsung heroes of the Conference who never appear in this hall, most particularly my own secretary, but all of the secretaries who spend infinite amounts of time trying to schedule and arrange meetings and get us all together. I think that in the context of the work they are the ones that have to work the hardest - not the ones that go to the meetings. So a particular thanks to them.

It only remains for me to wish Ambassador Rodríguez Cedeño of Venezuela, my successor in the Chair as of 15 February, all success in his endeavours and to assure him of the full cooperation of the United States delegation.

I see we have a request from South Africa.

Mr. MARKRAM (South Africa): A fortnight ago my delegation put a proposal and a request to you to identify a person to undertake the task of Special Coordinator on nuclear disarmament. We have not heard your report on your consultations in that regard, and we would like to hear a report in this connection.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the delegate from South Africa. At the CD plenary on 28 January I was asked, as President, to try to identify a Special Coordinator to assist in carrying out informal consultations with a view to reaching consensus. I would like to report that, as I stated I would, I have tried to do just that. In order to facilitate this task, I posed a number of questions to the CD members, through their respective coordinators at the Presidential consultations. These questions were: Are there any candidates for Special Coordinator? Can the President appoint the Coordinator on his own initiative, or does he need Conference approval, that is, consensus? And how long should the Coordinator's mandate run?

The answers to these questions have made it unequivocally clear to me that beyond the call to "try to identify" there is no shared understanding among CD members about how paragraph 5 (d) should be implemented. In this regard, it also seemed to me that, whatever the intention of those who drafted CD/1036, a practice has grown up during the past several years of only appointing Special Coordinators after the Conference has approved not only the individuals, but also their mandates and the length of their service. My consultations revealed that some members would strongly object to modifying that practice.

There is no doubt that I could identify any number of candidates to serve as Special Coordinator. Indeed, the Coordinator of the Group of 21 indicated the availability of many of his members to undertake this responsibility. But, once identified, it is also evident that there is no agreement on how, or even whether, such an individual could be appointed. Thus, I will not subject any individual to the embarrassment of being identified only to become the object of what the CD seems to be so good at, squabbles and derision. I could, for example, in my capacity as President, identify myself, only to object to my appointment in my national capacity. I am not going to do that. It is also apparent that for some in the CD the way to move forward on agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", would be to re-establish its AHC on FMCT and to continue the Troika procedure established last year, pending and without prejudice to whatever agreement on a work programme is eventually reached for this session. Others, of course, wish an ad hoc committee or working group on nuclear disarmament. I pass these proposals on to my successor, in the hopes that he fares better than have I in identifying a consensus basis upon which to proceed.

South Africa has the floor.

Mr. MARKRAM (South Africa): The question on whether or not a Coordinator has to be appointed by consensus was in our opinion beyond the scope of your mandate. Last week my delegation requested that you hold

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open-ended informal consultations on the identification of a Special Coordinator in terms of paragraph 5 (d) of decision CD/1036. At that juncture, no delegation in the Conference raised any objection to the holding of such consultations. My delegation finds it regrettable that such consultations are not held so that delegations could air their views on this issue in an open and a transparent manner.

It is clear from our discussions this morning that there are fundamental differences of opinion with regard to how this Conference applies its rules of procedure, particularly paragraph 5 (d) of document CD/1036. In order to once and for all clarify this issue, my delegation requests that the Legal Adviser of the United Nations be requested to provide an opinion as to whether or not consensus is in fact required for the appointment of a Special Coordinator in terms of paragraph 5 (d) of CD/1036. My delegation will abide by the outcome of the Legal Adviser's opinion.

Mr. President, on the basis of your report on our proposal for the identification of a Special Coordinator, my delegation would request that you now put the following question to the Conference: Can the Conference agree to the appointment of a Special Coordinator - that could be identified later - to consult on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament or on its mandate?

The PRESIDENT: Thank you. I take note of your request for a legal opinion. In terms of the open-ended consultations, I fully considered your request and after several consultations with the Group Coordinators, I reached the conclusion that there is no consensus on this issue and therefore, no possibility that open-ended consultations, or any other procedural device, would produce any different outcome. I therefore concluded that there is no alternative but to pass this question on to my successor as CD President, in the hope that positions may evolve to a point where progress on this issue is possible.

I give the floor to South Africa.

Mr. MARKRAM (South Africa): My request was for you to put the question to the floor at the moment. Could I ask that the question be put to the floor?

The PRESIDENT: Is there any objection to putting this question to the floor? I give the floor to Australia.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): I think we have reached a rather farcical situation where issues are now going to be dragged into a voting situation à la First Committee. I remember last year, towards the end of the session, when a similar exercise was considered, we had a number of delegations - the one I remember best was our colleague from Morocco, who said "This is not the practice in the CD". We are here to find a consensus to move forward on the basis of a consensus. This is an important issue for all of us. Australia could support a mechanism in this Conference to discuss nuclear disarmament on the understanding that such a mechanism would enjoy the consensus of this

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

Conference. I fear that if we push issues ahead in this manner we will have a series of other issues coming to the fore and, as you have said in your very appropriate statement, that this will leave us in a situation where the credibility of this forum is called very much into question.

Mr. MERNIER (Belgium) (translated from French): I would like to take the floor as Coordinator of the Western Group. I think that the tradition in this forum is that this type of question is raised during the Presidential consultations, which take place after Group meetings. I would not like this question to be answered in this room without our Group having had an opportunity to meet and perhaps to adopt a new position. But so far, I can see no such new position. I would therefore ask you, Sir, to take note of the fact that, in our Groups, there is no consensus on this question.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco): I think that my name was mentioned, and I did not have the time to raise my nameplate, but I think that my delegation has not changed its mind. I stick by the principle. And whether it is this issue or any other one, I confirm to you that my position remains the same as the one that I voiced last year, which is no surprise, except if we decide in consultations that we are going to put this kind of question to the Conference. So I thank my good friend Ambassador Campbell for reiterating my own position. But it is still the same.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): As the Chairman of the East European Group, I would like to support what was said by the Chairman of the Western Group, Ambassador Mernier.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): This has been a very interesting exchange, and even, as far as my delegation is concerned, rather amusing. I have heard delegations invoke traditions that do not exist and one of those delegations - I recall it quite well - last year, faced with a similar question, made an eloquent speech saying, and I will repeat it in English because I remember it well, "It is time to stand up and be counted". Let it be noted how delegations change their opinions according to the side of the table from which the questions originate. I agree that we are here to negotiate and that we must proceed by consensus. I would also venture to say, with regard to the questions that were put by the representative of South Africa, as he had every right to do, that my delegation would have no objection to the appointment of a special rapporteur to seek consensus on the establishment of and a possible mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: It is clear to me from the comments from the floor that this question is not ready for decision today
. I presume further consultations will determine whether the situation is different next week. If there are no further comments from any delegations, this concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 18 February, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.815
18 February 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 18 February 1999, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Rodríguez Cedeño (Venezuela)

GE.99-60676 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I wish to declare open the 815th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is a great honour for me and for Venezuela to take the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament, especially in these initial stages, which are always difficult, when we have before us the challenge of adopting the decisions required to make progress and begin substantive consideration of the items on our agenda. I am certain that the political will and flexibility will enable us to build the necessary consensus to adopt our programme of work as soon as possible, on which, I am equally certain, we have been able to identify important common elements in these first days.

First of all, I am pleased to express my deepest gratitude to my predecessor, Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States, for the effort he made during the first stage of our work, during which we succeeded in adopting our agenda and began to consider the item relating to the programme of work. I should now like on behalf of us all to welcome the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mrs. Aaslang Haga, who will be our first speaker this morning.

As you know, Ambassador Campbell of Australia will soon complete his duties as the representative of his country to the Conference, as he has been called by his Government to discharge other official duties. Ambassador Campbell did an excellent job as Special Coordinator on the subject of anti-personnel mines, facilitating consensus on ways and means to address the item, within this Conference. On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I would like to wish Ambassador Campbell the greatest success in his tasks and the greatest well-being and happiness in his personal life.

In addition to the honourable representative of Norway I have on my list of speakers the distinguished representatives of New Zealand, Brazil, the Republic of Korea, Ukraine, Cuba, who will address the Conference on behalf of the Group of 21, and Chile. I should now like to call on the honourable State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mrs. Aaslang Haga.

Mrs. HAGA (Norway): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Rodríguez Cedeño, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to cooperating with you in our efforts to make substantive progress on disarmament issues in 1999. I hope we all will work to facilitate the smooth operation of this body by building on the agreements and compromises that were reached through so much hard work last year.

The last time I addressed the Conference I concluded my statement by saying that we would like to see work started immediately on the reform questions. That was a year ago. Not much has happened since then. Not even a modest expansion by five countries has been possible. This is very disappointing.

The most pressing reform issue continues to be the enlargement of the membership of the CD. As it has been repeated over and over again, the

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reputation, relevance, political legitimacy and, ultimately, the future of this Conference is closely linked to its membership. Treaties within the framework of the CD are negotiated with a view to universal application and adherence. It follows that the negotiations must be open to universal participation. And no less important, there is nothing to justify that we, the current members of the CD, should exclude other countries that are equally committed to disarmament and peaceful international relations from membership. I deeply regret that the Conference has not been able to admit Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia as members. It is all the more difficult to understand and accept that this decision is being upheld as nobody seems willing to explain what their objections really are.

We would warmly welcome a decision to accept these five countries as new members. This would, however, only be a first and very limited step. The Conference must continue on its way towards universal membership and become open to any country wishing to be a member.

For too long the performance of the Conference has demonstrated that the current working methods of the CD are in urgent need of reform. We recognize, of course, that procedural problems or disputes normally stem from political differences. But if the present situation is allowed to continue, the credibility and standing of the Conference will be further undermined.

We would therefore strongly advise that the excellent and impressive work carried out by the reform Special Coordinators, Ambassadors Hofer, Illanes and Náray, be resumed as soon as possible.

I would now like to set forth our position on some of the major multilateral arms control and disarmament issues.

Like other parties to the NPT, Norway is deeply committed to nuclear disarmament. Our ultimate goal continues to be the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon States have a particular responsibility for reducing the political value attached to nuclear weapons and thereby the role of these weapons in international politics. They must continue to have this responsibility.

We welcome all practical initiatives and measures that can help to enhance transparency in the nuclear field, that involve new reductions in existing nuclear arsenals, and that help to further lower the existing alert level of strategic forces.

Nuclear issues are a concern to all countries. The international community has a legitimate interest in being kept informed about the progress achieved as well as any difficulties and challenges encountered in the nuclear disarmament process. The CD should not, in our view, be mandated to negotiate nuclear weapons reductions. This does not mean that we see no role for the CD in questions related to nuclear disarmament. By establishing a procedure for reporting on nuclear issues and policies, the CD could serve an an important forum for discussion and exchange of information. This would give the nuclear-weapon States an opportunity to supply information both on the results

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achieved through unilateral and bilateral initiatives and on their nuclear policies, thus demonstrating their commitment to nuclear disarmament. Increased transparency on nuclear issues would enhance confidence and reduce distrust.

This is why Norway, together with Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, has submitted a proposal that the CD should establish an ad hoc working group to study ways and means of establishing an exchange of information and views on efforts towards nuclear disarmament. We believe this is a constructive proposal. We hope it could result in an agreement on how the CD could address issues related to nuclear disarmament in a satisfactory way. The proposal solely addresses procedures for dealing with questions concerning nuclear disarmament, and does not presuppose any particular result. It is based on an assessment of what this forum can realistically be expected to agree on. In our view, the proposal offers a flexible approach which will safeguard the interests of all parties.

Further progress in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is also dependent on our willingness to address the issue of fissile material for weapons purposes. Limiting access to such material is the key to preventing horizontal and vertical proliferation. None of the arms control or arms reduction treaties that have been negotiated so far include particular provisions on fissile material. The time is ripe to make such material subject to strict regulation and control

Norway was encouraged by the decision last year to establish the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We are equally disappointed that the CD has not yet been able to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee. The time has now come for members of this body to move from endless consultations to a concrete decision on an early start of negotiations. From the very beginning of this process, we must demonstrate innovative flexibility so as not to exclude any pragmatic and practical solutions necessary to deal with fissile material in an adequate manner.

In our view the main focus of the negotiations should be on the production of fissile material. But at the same time we believe it is important to address the issue of past production and existing stockpiles in one way or another. The views expressed thus far regarding stockpiles do not always reflect the complexity of these issues. The current discussions on whether stockpiles are to be included in the negotiations will probably not lead us anywhere. We should rather give careful consideration to the question of whether certain categories of stockpile material are suitable for inclusion in a future treaty. It is important to consider the options that are available for States to address the stockpile issue in a multilateral framework.

We do not believe that the stockpile issue related to military inventories should be considered in treaty negotiations. On the other hand, we believe there would be merit in addressing fissile material that has been extracted from dismantled nuclear warheads and other military stocks that are

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now surplus to or in excess of military requirements. Fissile material that has been removed from the military production cycle and is redundant is steadily increasing. It represents an increased danger in terms of proliferation. This inventory should no longer have the status of military non-verifiable material. It should gradually be made subject to a transparent, non-military and civilian regime subject to international verification. It is important to recognize that this material cannot be transferred instantaneously from the military to the civilian sector, and that the steps involved in doing so will be complex, time-consuming and expensive. Serious consideration should be given to developing and establishing an international norm for States in dealing with stockpiles of surplus material. Such a norm, developed within the framework of the negotiations, should ensure the following: irreversibility - that is, that none of these stocks are returned or diverted to weapon programmes and that the material is rendered inaccessible to military use as soon as practicable; secondly, security - that is, that the stocks are made secure from theft and sabotage; thirdly, safety - that is, that the material does not harm human health or the environment; and fourthly, national control - that is, the development of an effective international standard for material accounting and self-auditing which will help to improve national control of such stocks.

Norway believes that the treaty provisions regarding production must include a credible verification regime that will provide the same degree of assurance with regard to compliance as other non-proliferation and arms control agreements. Considerations of principle and practical application suggest that IAEA safeguards and existing export control regimes should be used as a basis when drawing up the verification arrangements for this treaty.

When it comes to verification of excess military fissile material, we fully acknowledge the complexity of this issue. In this regard it may be necessary to develop a separate set of verification methods and procedures that will enhance international confidence that fissile material subject to control is not returned to nuclear-weapons programmes, while at the same time ensuring that the inspectors do not gain access to classified information. In this context, it may be of interest to look at the Trilateral Initiative by the United States, the Russian Federation and IAEA on fissile material that is no longer required for defence purposes, and the ongoing process of drafting a model verification agreement.

Let me briefly refer to a related issue which is important to my country. Highly enriched uranium that is produced for non-explosive purposes, and used as fuel for the propulsion of naval reactors, also involves a risk of proliferation and is cause for concern. We should consider addressing this issue in the negotiations with a view to improving safety and the control of such material. We should also consider devising arrangements to ensure that this material is in fact used for non-explosive purposes by confirming both the amount of the material intended for such use and the actual area of use. When confirming the amount of the material, this should be done without specific reference to its design and composition.

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We believe that issues not obviously part of the negotiations should nonetheless be addressed in an adequate way. These issues may best be dealt with within a separate framework designed to enhance transparency and build confidence in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Norway has on several occasions presented a four-step proposal for increased transparency and confidence-building measures for such material. The proposal emphasizes the importance of establishing voluntary measures that would increase transparency on holdings of plutonium and highly enriched uranium through reporting, inspection and safeguard procedures with a view to introducing agreed, monitored net reductions from these stockpiles. One could consider whether IAEA should play a role in facilitating a process to this end.

The "Joint statement of principles for management and disposition of plutonium" by the United States and the Russian Federation, agreed at the September summit meeting in Moscow, is a path-breaking initiative in this regard. It demonstrates what can be achieved through a voluntary process. We would like to see this initiative expanded to the multilateral level, enabling close cooperation with other countries that possess a nuclear capability.

We are delighted that the Convention banning anti-personnel landmines will enter into force as early as 1 March this year. The fact that more than 130 States have signed, and well over 60 have already ratified, is a testimony to the political force behind this Convention. The Convention is one of the more important diplomatic achievements in recent years. But millions of people are still suffering from the threat of anti-personnel landmines. Our efforts have only just begun. We have reached a new stage in the Ottawa Process where the emphasis is shifting from campaigning to implementation.

We are certainly very grateful to the Government of Mozambique for its offer to host the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo in May. It is highly appropriate for the First Meeting of States Parties to take place in a mine-affected country, which also is a recognition of Africa's crucial role in bringing about a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. The forthcoming meeting in Maputo will be the first manifestation of the fact that the Convention has entered into force and the successful establishment of a framework for resolving the tremendous humanitarian problems caused by landmines. The meeting will provide an opportunity for States parties, interested non-States parties, humanitarian agencies and organizations to discuss in a constructive and forward-looking way initiatives and measures to effectively implement the objectives of the Mine Ban Convention. We appreciate the invitation from Mozambique to an informal consultative meeting here in Geneva on 1 March as part of the preparations for the First Meeting of States Parties. We hope that all interested parties will take this opportunity to contribute positively to a successful meeting in Maputo.

We must ensure the future sustainability of this very important process. We must continue to advocate the universalization of the Convention and to consolidate the norm it has established. At the same time we must make the

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best possible use of the human, financial and technical resources made available to implement the objectives of the Convention. We should aim to organize this work within the framework of the Convention, in a way which promotes continuity, openness, transparency and inclusiveness. An important element to this end would be to settle for a single venue for future annual meetings of States parties, review conferences and other meetings related to the Convention. We should also consider how to structure inter-sessional work so as to maintain the open-ended and cooperative spirit of the Ottawa Process. As a future venue and a focal point for the Mine Ban Convention and the various activities in the field of mine action that it will produce, Geneva would offer a wide variety of diplomatic and technical expertise, a broad representation of diplomatic missions and humanitarian agencies and relevant non-governmental organizations, including ICRC, WHO, UNHCR and the newly established Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

We are also looking forward to the first annual meeting of the States parties to the amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which will take place later this year. Both the Mine Ban Convention and the amended Protocol II with its consultation mechanism ensure that the landmine issue will continue to be on the international disarmament agenda in the future.

We note that some countries have shown an interest in a separate, limited ban on transfers of anti-personnel landmines. We agree with those who have suggested that this issue can most appropriately be discussed in the context of the CCW.

In my statement to the CD last year, I highlighted the need for international action to combat the proliferation of small arms. I am certainly pleased to note that a number of important initiatives in this regard have been launched over the last year, and the issue is steadily rising higher on the international agenda.

The moratorium on the import, export and production of light weapons declared in November 1998 by all West African States is the most far-reaching programme to date. It is now up to the international community to contribute to the success of this initiative, both by respecting the moratorium and by contributing resources for its implementation. Norway has supported the development of this initiative for several years. We will co-host an information meeting on the West Africa Moratorium here in Geneva before summer.

Other important initiatives include the negotiation in Vienna of a firearms protocol under the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the ratification and implementation of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, and the implementation of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

It is clear that without technical and financial resources, many of the promising international initiatives now under way might fizzle out and become futile. In particular, this is true of the many regional, national and local

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projects in conflict-prone developing countries. Norway recently launched a UNDP Trust Fund for supporting efforts to prevent and reduce the proliferation of small arms. We encourage other countries to contribute to this fund. I am pleased to note that Switzerland has already supported the fund and a number of other countries are looking into the possibility of doing so.

The many initiatives and approaches available make it particularly important to try to develop a common understanding of the main concerns and issues to be addressed relating to small arms. We are already moving towards a more common understanding, but enhanced coherence, better coordination and more concerted action are still required. To cite resolution 53/77 B of the General Assembly, there is a "need to advance efforts towards wider cooperation and better coordination in the struggle against the accumulation, proliferation and widespread use of small arms through the [Oslo Common Understanding] ... and the Brussels Call for Action".

Our aim is to create a safer environment for those who suffer from the results of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms. The various regional conflicts require different approaches and solutions, but we should generally seek to include the small arms aspect as part of conflict resolution. We must also find ways to strengthen preventive measures in order to halt the uncontrolled spread of small arms. The complexity of the small arms issue calls for a cautious approach where smaller steps may produce more practical results than too ambitious and perhaps more spectacular endeavours.

The issues of landmines and small arms demonstrate how important it is to address human security. This fact does not exclude the continued relevance of State security questions. Indeed, human security and State security are interrelated. To secure a safer world for all, we must comprehensively deal with the problems related to both weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the honourable State Secretary of Norway for her statement and the kind words she addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Pearson.

Mr. PEARSON (New Zealand): Mr. President, first let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you well in your endeavours to engage the CD in substantive work and you can count on New Zealand support and cooperation. I also wish to record our appreciation for the work of your predecessor, Ambassador Grey, to seek agreement on our programme of work. Ambassador Grey worked hard to breathe life into the CD and his effort in undertaking consultations is appreciated. May I welcome all our new colleagues to the Conference from Colombia, Argentina, Slovakia, Sweden, Israel, Indonesia and Venezuela? I should also like to bid farewell to two special colleagues - Ambassador Campbell and Ambassador Bourgois. We shall miss the perceptiveness, good sense and wit that they have brought to this Conference.

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

Mr. President, as you search for consensus on our work this year, it is essential that nuclear issues are accorded the highest priority. This, at least, seems to be one objective on which we can all agree.

New Zealand continues to believe, along with the majority of others, that the Conference can, and must, address nuclear disarmament. We cannot continue to dismiss this imperative as being inappropriate or premature. Nor can we accept the view that addressing nuclear disarmament in this Conference might, in some way, defeat the purpose for which we are striving: the eventual elimination of these pernicious weapons.

We have heard the argument that the Conference is not the place to deal with nuclear disarmament at this time. We find that assertion extraordinary given that this body is the sole multilateral negotiating forum charged with addressing disarmament. It is not credible to repeatedly endorse the need for nuclear disarmament in United Nations resolutions and in other settings, and not to pursue the objective in the CD.

We have heard the assertion that establishing a formal mechanism on nuclear disarmament means attempting to multilaterilize the ongoing bilateral disarmament agenda. New Zealand does not advocate the multilateralization of the START process. And we have always made that clear. The bilateral START process is hugely significant and has our full and unequivocal support. But, we continue to believe that a mechanism - an appropriate subsidiary body - can and should be established in the Conference. This is no more and no less than our international obligations require. Moreover, the interests of non-nuclear-weapon States should not be excluded from contributing to the process of nuclear disarmament. As we have noted before in this chamber, nuclear weapons are multilateral in their reach and impact whether we like it or not. That gives us all the right to continue to call for their progressive elimination and the responsibility to work for that goal.

Our aim in the CD is not to design a negotiating straitjacket. Rather, we wish to see a mechanism where there can be serious debate and substantive deliberation on steps that might add value in the future, to the bilateral process already under way and the plurilateral dimension that will need to begin at an appropriate moment. Adding value would underpin the process, not undermine it.

Again, New Zealand made this call in last year's General Assembly as one of the co-sponsors of the "New agenda" resolution. And we shall continue to do so. It is a call that enjoys significant international support both inside and outside this Conference. It is a call on which the people we are here to represent expect us to demonstrate leadership.

In exploring whether consensus is possible on a mechanism, we should ensure a credible outcome. It should deliver more than the present "troika" arrangement has been capable of doing. The "troika" is a step in the right direction, and we welcome very much the efforts of all those Presidents who

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

have pursued its mandate. But, this arrangement has tended to lack transparency, visibility and momentum. If we were to continue with it, then these shortcomings need to be rectified.

An arrangement confined only to reporting would be insufficient, in our view. It would be unfortunate, we believe, to relegate this body - which is mandated to negotiate - to a role where its members are passive recipients of briefings.

There are two proposals before us - from South Africa and Canada - which deserve very close attention. They do not seek to prejudge an outcome. Nor do they prescribe a negotiating mandate. They do not attempt to determine unrealistic time-frames. And they do not call for the multilateralization of ongoing bilateral and unilateral disarmament. They seek only to identify "if and when" future moves should be explored.

They offer both the ingredients and the prospect to move forward. Serious deliberation and debate on what might not be the way to proceed would not compromise any country's security interests. On the contrary, the greater degree of transparency such a process would deliver would enhance national security interests. That is what we mean in adding value. We should, therefore, ask ourselves where the real difficulty is. When our work in this Conference will always be driven by consensus, there is no threat of descending down an imaginary slippery slope.

Another immediate priority before us is to get down to work on a fissile materials treaty. It is unfortunate that we have yet to engage in negotiations for this treaty. It is even more extraordinary when, 186 countries agreed this was a priority in 1995 when the "Principles and objectives" of the NPT were adopted; when, there have been many resolutions, over a period of years, in the General Assembly which have called for work to begin without delay; when, the CD endorsed this imperative in its annual report; when, in August last year, we took the step of establishing an ad hoc committee; and, when, only last December, another such call was made in the General Assembly which enjoyed consensus.

Designing a fissile treaty that will have the capacity to address non-proliferation and disarmament will be no mean challenge. It will require some creative thinking and political flexibility. One of our tasks will be to ensure that the controls put in place will justify international confidence. Another challenge will be to deliver an instrument that is both non-discriminatory and multilateral in its reach. And, we shall need to agree on verification machinery that is creditable but cost-effective.

While we shall want to comment shortly in more detail on the possible shape of this treaty, we are realistic enough to appreciate that dealing with production and stocks may not be possible in a single instrument. One might have to follow the other. But, sooner or later, the international community will want to confront existing stocks of fissile material in seeking to create a permanent disarmament measure.

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

New Zealand does not indulge in drawing linkages on our work programme. But, we do find it very odd that unfinished business in one year is not able to be taken up automatically in the following year. And, it makes our annual report appear meaningless.

In the real world, the imperatives of disarmament and arms control do not arrange themselves in tidy and convenient calendar packages. Neither should we attempt to do so.

For this reason, we can accept the rolling over of our 1998 programme of work as the basis for getting down to business this year. It may not satisfy everyone - and it contains issues which New Zealand does not regard as immediate priorities - but it did satisfactorily capture consensus.

If anything, the 1998 programme of work was probably overambitious given the limited time we have in any year for deliberation and negotiation. This year, if we are to engage in substantive negotiations on an issue which we regard collectively as a priority, we could perhaps focus on a smaller menu and concentrate our energy and resources to that end. The old adage of biting off more than one can chew may be apposite.

For New Zealand, work on a mine transfer ban, for example, is not a priority. We are a State party to the Ottawa Convention and universalization of that new norm is our objective. Should partial measures, such as a mine transfer ban, still be considered important, then we should explore whether it would be more appropriate to take this up in the context of the CCW.

We think also that one Special Coordinator to deal with all the reform issues might make more sense because it would allow us to look at these questions in the round. While we are at it, it might be timely to take a look at our group structures and the relevance these have in today's world.

Addressing the proliferation in small arms is becoming more urgent. There is an emerging consensus on the devastating effects that excessive and destabilizing accumulations of these weapons are having, and we welcome the new initiatives which are seeking to address this pressing problem.

The past year was significant, if not momentous, on almost all fronts. For those of us who set such a high store by non-proliferation and disarmament, the results were mixed. A significant body blow was dealt to the non-proliferation norms last year. And, we had a meagre outcome at the second NPT PrepCom in Geneva.

A way must be found to deal with the reciprocal obligations and demands of disarmament on the one hand, and on the other the imperatives of non-proliferation. One is not possible without the other.

The NPT is absolutely fundamental. And, it is essential and indispensable as ever. We could not accept, and will reject, any suggestion that it might need to be revisited. But, we must ensure also that the legitimate expectations of its members are not suppressed.

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

Looking beyond this Conference, we are reminded that it has taken almost a quarter of a century after entry into force of the original Convention to design verification machinery on biological weapons. That is not a brilliant track record for non-proliferation. We need to lift our game in these Geneva negotiations and we seek their completion before the end of this year. New Zealand is committed to that goal.

Our aim in these negotiations must be to deter and prevent violations of the Convention and to ensure compliance. We shall need to take into account the legitimate concerns of industry. And, we must address all aspects of the negotiating mandate.

New Zealand appreciates that some States parties who submit themselves to the Convention's obligations in good faith may lack the scientific and technical means to uphold these obligations unaided.

Experience suggests that these problems come not always from a lack of political will, but from a lack of knowledge of what to do. The negotiations should recognize this.

Finally, Mr. President, we hope during your term that we can take a decision soon to expand our membership as recommended by the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Hofer. This is also unfinished business in what must be a process of universalization of the Conference. New Zealand will continue to press for this outcome.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now wish to give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Bahadian.

Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all allow me to congratulate you, as the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Venezuela, a neighbouring country and a friend of Brazil, on taking up the post of President of the Conference. I am sure that with your tact and your diplomatic skill, as well as your knowledge of international law, our Conference will be able to commence its substantive work. You may always rest assured of the support and cooperation of the delegation of Brazil.

(continued in English)

Let me also express my appreciation for the efforts made by your predecessor, Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States of America, and pay tribute to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, as well as to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and their staff for their efficiency in facilitating the work of this Conference.

As we continue to discuss our programme of work, my delegation wishes to share its views on some of the issues before the Conference. It seems that there is no dispute that we should build upon the agreements and compromises

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

reached last year. We could not in fact do otherwise without risking moving backwards and losing the progress achieved. A long-awaited decision was taken in 1998 by this Conference - the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which should constitute an effective and genuine measure of both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Brazil is encouraged in this regard by the fact that resolution 53/77 I of the United Nations General Assembly was approved by consensus, thus providing the necessary political support for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on this matter.

Picking up where we left off in 1998 does not, however, preclude a serene and in-depth reassessment of developments outside this Conference and of the outcome of deliberations and consultations held at this forum since then. This is particularly relevant with regard to one issue - that of nuclear disarmament - which has not yet been squarely addressed by the CD. Certainly, had we already started to seriously consider proposals put forward by delegations or groups of delegations, many of the difficulties we now face would be overcome. Beyond national or group positions, what is actually at stake and cannot be disregarded in the decisions we must adopt are the general expectations of the international community, as expressed first and foremost in the resolutions approved by the United Nations General Assembly.

It is Brazil's considered view that we must keep the momentum achieved last year on the fissile materials treaty but at the same time allow for substantive progress in other areas. The reasons for prompt and vigorous action on other nuclear disarmament-related issues both outside and within the framework of this Conference are apparent. Serious and worrisome events have taken place in the last few years and have been brought to the attention of this forum. As Ambassador Mark Moher of Canada and others have been lucidly warning, the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, which is anchored in the NPT, is under severe strain and even threat.

Essential pillars of that regime have indeed been shaken by developments and policies which negatively affect several areas, notably, I should stress, the process of bilateral reductions between the United States of America and the Russian Federation; the global norm on nuclear testing; the role of nuclear weapons and deterrence doctrines in the post-cold-war world; the cessation of the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons; the nuclear strategic stability based on the ABM Treaty; and the strengthened review process of the NPT.

Decisive action to counter these ominous signs is still lacking. They obviously impact on the CD, and the CD, as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, cannot shirk its responsibility in discussing and subsequently negotiating multilateral arrangements aimed at promoting disarmament measures in areas where international peace and security is most threatened.

On the occasion of the deposit of our instrument of accession to the NPT last year, the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, Luiz Felipe Lampreia,

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

reiterated my country's strong rejection of the notion that nuclear weapons can provide security to any nation. These weapons rather breed tension and instability and constitute a serious roadblock to international peace and security. Although we recognize that some progress has been achieved in the reduction of nuclear arsenals by the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as well as through unilateral steps that have been taken by some of the other nuclear-weapon States, that progress still falls very much short of the objective of nuclear disarmament. The NPT, my Foreign Minister stressed, will not have fulfilled its goal, as set out in article VI, until all nuclear weapons are completely eliminated. This is the clear understanding of the Brazilian executive branch and of our National Congress in expressing their consent to my country's adherence to the Treaty.

Brazil takes note with interest of the strengthened review process of the NPT which was agreed at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. We look forward to participating actively and constructively at the coming preparatory meeting for the 2000 Review Conference, which in our view should recoup the ground lost at previous meetings and resume the positive spirit and substantive role with which the strengthened review process started in 1995.

We note that the document on principles and objectives for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation details some of the steps to be undertaken by the international community and in particular by the nuclear-weapon States in fulfilment of their commitments under article VI of the NPT. The first and second objectives of that document have already been dealt with, as we concluded the CTBT and are hopefully about to start meaningful negotiations on a fissile material treaty.

It is imperative that we should not wait for the end of negotiations on a fissile material treaty, the duration of which is hardly predictable at this stage, to start considering the next steps pursuant to article VI and its corollary, that is, the third commitment in the "Principles and objectives" document, which foresees "systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons".

More than 30 years have elapsed since the conclusion of the NPT. No one disagrees that nuclear disarmament, like any other complex endeavour, can only be achieved on a step-by-step basis. That does not mean that the nature, timing, discussion and negotiation of all aspects associated with nuclear disarmament are to be determined or concluded exclusively by the nuclear-weapon States. Substantive discussions, for instance, on a fissile material treaty which resulted in the basis on which we are going to conduct our negotiations, i.e. the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein, were already taking place in this Conference when the CTBT was being negotiated.

The consideration of the third objective necessarily involves the question of the role to be played by the CD. As it did in the past, when preparing the ground for negotiations on the CTBT and the fissile material treaty, this Conference should continue to interact in a synergistic manner

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

with the NPT review process and other mechanisms in the discussion and subsequent negotiation of multilateral steps in the nuclear disarmament fields.

The pursuit, in parallel, of a series of mutually reinforcing measures at the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels for the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world is the core idea behind the Joint Declaration issued on 9 June last year by the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden, and entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". We are pleased that resolution 53/77 I of the United Nations General Assembly, the main elements of which derive from the 9 June Declaration, was approved by an overwhelming majority. This positive response eloquently demonstrates the international community's general perception that this initiative is incremental to other efforts, as nothing in it implies a lack of recognition of the importance of the strengthened NPT review process and of the steps taken by some of the nuclear-weapon States.

What that initiative is all about is indeed the strengthening of the NPT-based international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the further and speedy implementation of commitments undertaken therein under article VI. It draws our attention to the timeliness of measures that have been authoritatively examined and called for in many governmental and non-governmental instances. As is known, among these are civilian and ex-military authorities of high rank and political standing in the nuclear-weapon States themselves. Congressmen in those States, as well as in States with which they have military alliances, are also increasingly aware of the dangerous implications of continued reliance on nuclear weapons. It is therefore high time for governments of nuclear-weapon States to heed the calls of international as well as national informed public opinion on this matter.

As far as the role of the CD on nuclear disarmament is concerned, resolution 53/77 I endorses a long-standing banner of the majority of States represented in this chamber, which is the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with this issue. We have placed on record our support of the South African proposal on the establishment of an ad hoc committee because we continue to believe that ideas along those lines would, at this stage, draw us closer to the middle ground between more substantive proposals, on the one hand, of which we remain supportive while acknowledging that political will is still missing from other quarters, and the perpetuation of mere consultations such as the troika mechanism agreed last year, on the other hand. A similar stance is reflected in the working paper on nuclear disarmament submitted last year by Canada, the reissue of which at this session is most welcome as we attempt to strike a balance between various suggestions and overcome the current impasse on our programme of work. The Brazilian delegation is ready to cooperate with you, Mr. President, and with all interested delegations in order to advance approaches which, in keeping with the tradition and nature of this body, allow for the establishment of a subsidiary body with a deliberative role, but also with some perspective in its mandate of negotiations at the CD on the next multilateral steps in the nuclear disarmament field.

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

Let me now briefly comment on other issues before us. With regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, there seems to be an increasing awareness of the need to substantively tackle this issue in this forum, in view of recent technological developments and huge investments being made in certain capabilities that may in fact pose the risk of such an arms race taking place in the near future. Preventive disarmament should be our goal, as in the Outer Space Treaty with regard to weapons of mass destruction. Many questions have been raised, including a possible distinction between weaponization and militarization of outer space, which certainly require further technical expertise and clarification. This and other relevant issues only highlight the pressing need for the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on this subject.

On security assurances, deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee last year, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico, provided us with a better understanding of where we are now on this matter. The increasing complexities of this issue at the present international juncture should not discourage us from continuing our efforts. From our perspective, the task of the Ad Hoc Committee should be oriented towards identifying ways and means pending the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world, of providing those States which have unequivocally and in a legally binding manner renounced the nuclear weapons option with unconditional and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

As for anti-personnel landmines, Brazil warmly welcomes the fact that the two main international instruments aimed at limiting and eventually eliminating the scourge caused by these weapons - amended Protocol II of the CCW and the Ottawa Convention - have entered or are about to enter into force in a few days. These two agreements and their follow-up mechanisms provide a comprehensive response to the problems posed by anti-personnel landmines, although the complete removal of the millions of mines scattered around the world will regrettably continue to be one of the greatest humanitarian challenges of the international community for the foreseeable future. A CD role in this issue seems increasingly doubtful, not least from a practical point of view, as we come closer to the 2001 Review Conference of the CCW, where the issue of a possible strengthening of amended Protocol II provisions on transfers, for instance, could be discussed. Considerations such as these regarding duplication or dispersal of efforts should be taken up by a Special Coordinator on the subject.

We note that the grave problems associated with small arms and light weapons are being discussed elsewhere through intensive and praiseworthy efforts of which Brazil is supportive and that a comprehensive consideration of this issue will be the subject of an international conference to take place no later than 2001. Some exploratory work could yet be done at the CD on ideas such as an international code of conduct on arms transfers, or a global prohibition of illicit transfers which could draw upon the regional experience of the members of OAS in drafting the 1997 Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. Incidentally, I should like to recall that cooperation in the promotion of the objectives of the

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

Inter-American Convention is being pursued also at the subregional level, as agreed at the 1998 Santiago Summit of the Americas by the countries members of MERCOSUL (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) and the associate States of Bolivia and Chile. As regards transparency in armaments, Brazil is a long-standing participant in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and believes that the review of the operation and the further development of this confidence-building mechanism should be continued by the Group of Governmental Experts next year. This does not exclude the possibility of other ways and means of promoting transparency in armaments being explored by a Special Coordinator in the CD.

Finally, on issues related to the CD itself, the useful work done last year by the Special Coordinators on the agenda, expansion and improved and effective functioning should be continued. Brazil is of the view that, irrespective of the need to pursue further consultations on those issues, an early decision should be taken by this Conference on the admission of Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia, who will certainly make an important contribution to the work of this body.

To conclude, and departing from the substance of the issues at hand, I would invite colleagues to take a broader perspective of the importance of the decisions we take or fail to take in this chamber. As we all know, in a few weeks, we will be celebrating the centenary of the first International Peace Conference held in The Hague. Apart from its immediate achievements, one of the long-term implications of that historic conference is particularly noteworthy, that of promoting the multilateral framework as the venue in which issues that concern all humankind should be dealt with and resolved. We had to witness the horrors of two world wars in our century in order to revive The Hague spirit and live up to humanity's noblest aspirations with the creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations. As the latter was being created, weapons that are in sheer contradiction with the highest values of human civilization were being invented and were twice used. They provided a false sense of security, a symbol on the altar of which all, including those they purportedly protected, could be sacrificed. Now as this century comes to a close, general expectations that nuclear weapons would have a diminishing role after the end of the cold war remain unfulfilled and are rather being contradicted by the ominous developments and policies to which I referred above. In this context, the achievement of the objectives of this Conference will remain an elusive goal, unless it is allowed to take up its rightful responsibilities in dealing with the most important disarmament issue of all times and give a more decisive contribution to the attainment, in the not so distant future, of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Chang.

Mr. CHANG (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first I wish to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this critical juncture of our discussion. I am

(Mr. Chang, Republic of Korea)

confident that your prominent leadership and experience will guide us to a fruitful and substantive debate on our agenda items. I can assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation. Let me also express my deepest appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Grey, for his untiring efforts to get our work started as early as possible. I also wish to take this opportunity to extend my deep gratitude to Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the CD, and his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, for their valuable contribution in facilitating the work of the Conference.

The Conference on Disarmament has played an important role as the single multilateral negotiating body by producing major international treaties, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1992 and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty in 1997, thus strengthening further the disarmament and non-proliferation regime against weapons of mass destruction. Now we are facing another important task which will lead us one step further towards our common goal of international peace and security through non-proliferation and disarmament, that is, the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Four weeks of our precious time have elapsed, however, without reaching agreement on our substantive work programme since we started our 1999 session. My delegation strongly believes that it is incumbent upon us to adopt our work programme as soon as possible. We support the suggestion made by the previous President to start our work where we left off in 1998, which appears in document CD/1566. Great amounts of work and energy were already invested in adopting last year's work programme. What we need now is substantive work that will produce tangible results. I would like to urge all members of the CD to demonstrate flexibility so that we can promptly commence our substantive work.

As the Conference proceeds, many delegations have voiced their concern over the stalled progress in nuclear disarmament, and have urged the nuclear-weapon States to renew and abide by their commitment to reduce their nuclear arsenals, as they are obligated to do by article VI of the NPT. The Republic of Korea fully subscribes to this view. Given the lack of consensus among member States and the complex nature of nuclear disarmament, my delegation believes that it would be difficult for the CD to engage in multilateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament in the near future. We share, however, the sentiment of frustration expressed by some members of this Conference. It is certainly imperative that the nuclear-weapon States reinvigorate their efforts for nuclear disarmament in a very diligent manner. In this context, it is very important that START II be ratified without further delay, so that the START process will be accelerated. Such groundwork on the part of the nuclear-weapon States could ultimately lead to a situation where a multilateral framework for nuclear disarmament can be effectively pursued as a complementary but reinforcing measure.

As we have expressed on many occasions, the Republic of Korea places the highest priority on negotiations for an FMCT because this is the area where we can make concrete contributions to nuclear non-proliferation and ultimately towards nuclear disarmament. The relevance of the CD will be measured not by

(Mr. Chang, Republic of Korea)

its unending debate on issues where - important as they are - we cannot reach general agreement, but by its contributions to international security by producing concrete results.

Last year, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 53/77 I, in which it welcomed the decision by the CD to establish an ad hoc committee which shall negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and further encouraged the Conference to re-establish its Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of its 1999 session. We should not spare any effort to realize such aspirations of the international community which are so clearly manifest in this resolution. My delegation believes that it is high time for the CD to mobilize this momentum and move into the next stage of substantive negotiations as promptly as possible.

In conducting our negotiations on this issue, my delegation feels that in order for us to secure the universality and effectiveness of the treaty, it is very important that all the countries with nuclear capabilities, including non-member States to the NPT, fully take part in the negotiations from the initial stage. My delegation is also of the view that it would be greatly helpful if all nuclear-weapon States and threshold countries could declare, as an interim measure, a moratorium on the further production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons purposes, if they have not done so already.

While we believe that the CD should concentrate its limited resources for negotiations on concrete measures, we do not have any problem in supporting the CD as it exerts further effort to substantiate its discussion on such important issues as anti-personnel landmines (APLs), the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), negative security assurances (NSA) and transparency in armaments (TIA), including CD reform issues to accelerate the disarmament process.

Since our position on these issues has been well expressed before, I will only briefly touch upon some of them at this point.

First of all, regarding the issue of negative security assurances (NSA), it is the position of my Government that assurances by the nuclear-weapon States not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States should apply only to NPT member States which faithfully adhere to all the obligations under the Treaty. It also believes that NSA should not be provided to those countries that use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction.

On the issue of anti-personnel landmines, we fully share the humanitarian concern of the international community over the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, and recognize, from the humanitarian perspective, the need for a universal ban on all APLs. While we could not accede to the Ottawa Convention because of our security concerns at this stage, we support reappointing the Special Coordinator to discuss the issue of banning all APL transfers.

(Mr. Chang, Republic of Korea)

Finally, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its support for the admission of five new member States to the CD - Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia. We believe that the appropriate expansion of the CD is essential for strengthening its legitimacy as the unique global forum for disarmament. Last year we almost came to a consensus on this issue, and we believe that we should be able to take a positive decision on this matter.

In concluding I would like to draw particular attention to the pressing need for the world community to redouble its efforts to secure the universality and the full implementation of the existing non-proliferation and disarmament treaties, particularly those against weapons of mass destruction such as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and the NPT. In this respect, we attach great importance to the ongoing efforts by the BWC's Ad Hoc Group to draft a verification protocol. We also believe that every effort should be made to bring into force the CTBT at the earliest possible date. My delegation hopes that the positive reactions last year by India and Pakistan toward the signing of the CTBT will soon be translated into concrete actions. Likewise, we would like to call upon all other countries, and particularly those in the list of 44 countries set forth in the CTBT, to sign and ratify the Treaty, if they have not done so. For our part, domestic procedures are under way to ratify the CTBT, which we hopefully expect to complete in the first half of this year.

Mr. President, it is our firm belief that the CD should remain a viable and effective forum for negotiating disarmament measures. It is now time to build upon past achievements and launch concrete negotiations. Calling upon the members of the Conference to demonstrate political will and flexibility in adopting our work programme, I am very confident that, with your able guidance, the CD will be able to commence its crucial work immediately.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Maimeskul.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you warmly on the assumption of the responsible and honourable duties of CD President while also expressing our hope that you will succeed in facilitating the start of substantive work in the Conference this year. In accomplishing your task, you may rely upon consistent support from my delegation. I also should like to express words of gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Grey of the United States of America, who has really undertaken considerable efforts to achieve the goal mentioned above. The appreciation of this delegation goes to CD Secretary-General Mr. Petrovsky, to his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, and to the secretariat staff, whose potential and capabilities have not been fully utilized by the Conference, taking into account our pace during the last two years. We also wish to extend a warm welcome to our colleagues who have recently joined the Conference and to address words of gratitude to Ambassador Bourgois and Ambassador Campbell, who are leaving the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

Mr. President, you have inherited from your predecessor the adopted CD agenda and draft decision on the programme of work, which represent the set of draft decisions establishing subsidiary bodies and consultative mechanisms to deal with the different agenda items. In drafting his proposal, the President has taken into consideration the results obtained by the Conference last year. Like many other delegations, my delegation advised the President to merge decisions CD/1501 and CD/1547 and elaborate a single draft, thus ensuring the ground to start substantive work this year. One element of this draft decision deserves special attention - I mean item 3, related to the "Presidential troika" mechanism to deal with "Cessation of the arms race and nuclear disarmament". This mechanism is a proof of the creativity displayed by the CD last year and was quite relevant when neither an ad hoc committee to negotiate the FMCT nor a subsidiary body to deliberate the general aspects of nuclear disarmament had been established. Thus the "Presidential troika" was then a fair starting point for those who declared different priorities within agenda item 1. Since 11 August 1998, when the Conference adopted a decision to start negotiations on the FMCT, there has been enough time to think about what realistic mechanism to deal with the general aspects of nuclear disarmament could be established by this multilateral forum. From this perspective, the joint proposal on nuclear disarmament submitted by Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway seems to us very timely and adequately reflects the need for and the capacity of the CD to deal with nuclear disarmament issues. It fits well into item 3 of the Presidential draft of the programme of work rather than the "Presidential troika" mechanism, which we feel is now not enough for the Conference as a whole, although we recognize its undeniable positive features and still unexhausted potential to deal with issues relevant to agenda item 1 other than the FMCT.

Now I would like to dwell briefly on the draft programme of work contained in document CD/1570, submitted by the Group of 21. In comparison with the Presidential draft, it provides for the establishment of two more ad hoc committees, respectively on nuclear disarmament under agenda item 1 and on PAROS under agenda item 3. For obvious reasons, the idea of having an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament within the CD is highly attractive to Ukraine. But we are not at all convinced that at the present stage, negotiations within such a committee could accelerate the nuclear arms reduction process. This committee should rather be entrusted to deliberate on what further measures in nuclear disarmament after the FMCT could be negotiated multilaterally, as was reflected in the renewed Canadian proposal (CD/1568) concerning CD action on nuclear disarmament.

As the Group of 21 has not included the mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in document CD/1570, but is preparing to do so, we dare to recommend to our colleagues from the G-21 to opt for a more realistic mandate as contained, for example, in the South African or the Canadian proposal.

To have a programme of work is, without any doubt, in the interests of all CD members. I have already tried to indicate what modifications to the Presidential and G-21 draft decisions on the programme of work might increase in our view their potential to build CD consensus on this crucial issue and

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

lead us as a result to one agreed draft decision on the programme of work, but at the same time I realize how serious the difficulties we have to face are, while continuing to follow this "package" approach. What kind of alternatives do we have to the adoption of the comprehensive programme of work? The Conference may adopt the "limited" programme of work based on the common elements of the two existing drafts, as was proposed by Germany, and we could support this approach.

At the same time, my delegation, for its part, would like to propose exploring one more option: to re-establish only the Ad Hoc Committee under agenda item 1 to negotiate the FMCT, while at the same time indicating in the relevant Presidential statement that this decision is taken without prejudice to the adoption of the programme of work and that the presidency will continue intensive consultations on the establishment of subsidiary bodies or consultative mechanisms under the other agenda items. From our perspective, this idea is rather viable. It is based on the latest CD decision adopted last year, and takes into account the adoption by consensus of United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/77 I, calling on the CD to re-establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

As the CD has not yet established its programme of work, we will go into detail on its key elements at a later stage.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Amat Fores, who will be speaking on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. It is gratifying for me to see on the Presidential podium the representative of a friendly Latin American country such as Venezuela. We have every confidence in your experience and your diplomatic skills as you preside over this forum, and in this respect you may of course count on the full support and cooperation of the Cuban delegation. We also extend our appreciation to your predecessor and express sincere thanks for the work and the contribution made to our Conference by Mr. Petrovsky, the Secretary-General, and Mr. Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General, who always facilitates our work so kindly together with the rest of his team. On this occasion we echo the words of farewell expressed by other speakers to Ambassadors Campbell and Bourgois, who are leaving the Conference.

I asked for the floor this morning on behalf of the Group of 21 to present officially to the members of the Conference a draft decision and mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. The draft would read - and I will now read it in English:

(continued in English)

(Mr. Amat Fores, Cuba)

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1, 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapon convention."

(continued in Spanish)

Mr. President, I would request you to ensure that the secretariat takes the appropriate steps so that the draft decision which I have just presented on behalf of the Group of 21 is distributed as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Ambassador of Cuba for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. He may be sure the secretariat will take note for the distribution of the document. I should now like to call on the distinguished representative of Chile, Ambassador Illanes.

Mr. ILLANES (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all, as has been done by the delegates who have taken the floor this morning, I am very pleased to congratulate you on taking office as President of the Conference on Disarmament, and to offer you our full cooperation to help you bring your endeavours to a successful conclusion. At the same time, I would like to convey our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Grey of the United States, for his valuable contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of the 1999 session. Similarly, our gratitude to Messrs. Petrovsky, Bensmail and their colleagues for their valuable support for the work of this Conference. We extend a warm welcome to the new colleagues, the Ambassadors of Argentina, Colombia, Indonesia, Israel, Slovakia and Sweden, and express to Ambassadors Campbell and Bourgois our regret at seeing them leave and our appreciation for the very valuable work they have done at the service of the ideals of disarmament.

This is a brief statement that we must make in connection with what has just been said by our distinguished colleague the Ambassador of Cuba in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21. Regarding this proposed decision and mandate on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament that he has just read, my delegation would like to point out that Chile considers that the Conference on Disarmament, bearing in mind the high priority given to this item, should indeed establish a mechanism to study and identify issues which could be the subject of multilateral negotiations. Chile did not oppose the consensus reached in the Group of 21, which was reported on by the Ambassador of Cuba in his statement. However, as we have previously said in the regional group, we would like to state on this occasion that a mandate with the characteristics of the one just presented by the Group, in particular that part which refers to - I quote in English - "with a specified framework of time", contains elements that, in Chile's opinion,

(Mr. Illanes, Chile)

should not be determined a priori, but should rather constitute the natural outcome of the negotiations to be undertaken on the issue as a whole. In short, Chile believes that we should avoid setting artificial deadlines in this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Ambassador of Chile for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would now like to inform you that in the Presidential consultations we held yesterday, the possibility was raised of holding informal open-ended consultations to consider the item on the programme of work in view of the fact that we have a few proposals and new elements. I suggest that this informal meeting should be held next Tuesday, 23 February, at 10 a.m. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 25 February 1999 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.816
25 February 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 25 February 1999, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Rodríguez Cedeño (Venezuela)

GE.99-60768 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I wish to declare open the 816th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

(continued in French)

As you know, the representative of France to the Conference, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois, is about to leave Geneva, having been called by her Government to other important duties. Ambassador Bourgois joined our Conference at the height of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, during which she articulated and defended the position of her Government with authority and elegance, in very difficult political circumstances. The profound sensitivity she displayed towards the concerns of all the members of this Conference, and her balanced approach to the priorities each of us attached to the items on our agenda, greatly helped the Conference emerge from the deadlock in which it found itself last year, and justly earned her respect from us all. So, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf I would like to wish the Ambassador every success in her new duties and happiness in her private life.

(continued in Spanish)

I should now like to announce the list of speakers for today: the representatives of Austria, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Switzerland, Bulgaria and France. I should like now to call on the representative of Austria, Ambassador Kreid.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Mr. President, we are delighted to see you in the Chair of this Conference and hope you will enjoy your tenure. Let me also express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Grey, who has spared no efforts to advance our common cause but regrettably had to leave more work for you than, I dare say, he would have liked.

To the newcomers to this Conference we address our most cordial welcome. We hope that their unobstructed fresh view will be beneficial for our work. Those who are about to leave or have left Geneva, Ambassador Bourgois and Ambassador Campbell, should know that they will be warmly remembered by myself and my delegation. Our best wishes accompany them.

Between 1987 and the mid-1990s the radically transformed international security environment has produced quite a number of impressive results such as the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, START I and II, the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CWC), the indefinite extension of the NPT and the CTBT. Since then, disarmament efforts seem to have been running out of steam. Worse, concern is being voiced increasingly that the intricately woven fabric of disarmament treaties might unravel, putting at risk some of the pillars of the international security architecture like the Non-Proliferation or the ABM Treaties.

If there has been widespread hope that one of the benefits of the end of the cold war would be a world free from nuclear weapons, we have now come to

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

understand that the "nuclear peace dividend" is not an automatic by-product of East-West détente but that further sustained efforts are needed to make it a reality. Progress should still be feasible if the conviction gains ground that nuclear weapons are ill-suited to cope with the new security challenges. In an age of rapid advances in conventional arms technology, characterized by the use of precision delivery systems, electronic data collection, satellite surveillance etc., nuclear weapons should be recognized as dispensable, a burden rather than an asset.

Therefore, we feel strongly motivated in persisting in our efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in all possible forms. The CD is, we well know, the supreme multilateral body for disarmament negotiations. But it is more. The fact that we have regular sessions even when no negotiation is going on proves that this is a suitable forum to voice concerns, announce intentions and formulate demands in matters of disarmament. There is an impressive amount of expert knowledge and diplomatic skills concentrated in this room, and time and again our deliberations, which approach the subject matter from different, even opposing, viewpoints, have produced new and valuable insights and helped to clarify and develop national positions in no insignificant way.

This is to say even when we are not negotiating, our deliberations in the CD can be meaningful. It is precisely for this reason that a growing number of countries belonging to various groups have come to the conclusion that we should provide for a body dealing with questions of nuclear disarmament. In the face of the risk of slipping backwards, rather than keeping up the momentum of the immediate post-cold-war years, Austria finds itself among those countries which would like to see the nuclear disarmament agenda more firmly anchored in our work.

In our statement of 30 July 1998 addressed to this Conference I said: "We advocate the establishment of a mechanism which permits keeping the issue of general nuclear disarmament under constant and systematic review in the CD. An essential function of such a mechanism would be to prepare the ground for further clearly circumscribed areas of multilateral negotiations." We used the expression "mechanism" intentionally in order not to prejudge the final decision of the Conference because we believe that this crucial but delicate question needs to be handled with an open mind and with flexibility. The overriding purpose of this mechanism would be to enhance transparency and to build confidence between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, thereby paving the way for future multilateral negotiations on concrete issues.

The risk of nuclear confrontation between rival powers has diminished, but not completely disappeared, as events in South Asia have recently shown. We are still faced with acute risks connected to the possession of nuclear weapons such as their accidental use and, above all, their continued proliferation. Some worrying gaps in the global network of nuclear safeguards represent a considerable safety risk. We are aware that various efforts are undertaken by nuclear-weapon States in the area of the protection of vulnerable sites. As an example I should like to mention the Nuclear Material

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

Protection, Control and Accounting Programme between Russia and the United States, which has turned out to be one of the largest and most expensive arms control initiatives of recent times. Particularly significant in this context is the Mayak plutonium storage facility under construction in Chelyabinsk.

Our knowledge of the quality of physical protection in nuclear-weapon States is, however, incomplete and insufficient. Out of a total quantity of fissile material of weapons-grade quality, which is estimated at roughly 2,000 tons, almost 1,400 tons constitute so-called "transitional material", in other words, declared or undeclared excess material. Less than 10 per cent of this material is under safeguards. These figures alone point to the magnitude and urgency of the question of safeguards and controls of existing stocks, which cannot simply be ignored by the international community.

If and to what extent excess fissile material usable in weapons can be dealt with in the negotiations on a fissile material treaty remains to be seen. The problem will not simply go away by ignoring it. A multilateral approach to these questions might have the merit that the international community will assume responsibilities in an area where unilateral efforts might be insufficient, if only because the necessary funds are not available.

Last year, when we found ourselves, during a few weeks, in the privileged position of meeting in an Ad Hoc Committee with a complicated name but entrusted with the task of preparing a treaty on fissile material, Austria made two statements in which we addressed some of the questions related to an FMCT negotiation such as scope and verification. It would be redundant to repeat these arguments, especially at a moment when we are again left in suspense as to when we will be able to take up our work again.

We are still in the initial phase of our 1999 session, but it is hard not to succumb to the strong feeling of déja vu. Are we to repeat the process of last year in a cyclical motion, re-enacting the drama - or trauma - of our inability to come to a meaningful negotiation?

Ours is, indeed, a baffling situation. No arguments to invalidate decision CD/1547 of 12 August 1998 have been advanced. There is no discernible disagreement concerning the negotiation of a fissile material treaty. All proposals for a work programme include the re-establishment of this Ad Hoc Committee. This is good news, but it does not help us for the time being because we are entangled in a well-known network called linkages. These linkages were not present when the United Nations General Assembly adopted its consensus resolution on an FMCT last December. We refuse to believe that linkages are in our interest. We refuse to believe that we cannot reach a rapid and viable compromise. We therefore appeal to you, Mr. President, to do all that is needed in order to bring us back on a course of constructive cooperation.

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 was a forward-looking instrument at the time when it was negotiated. Its main purpose was to guarantee the peaceful use of outer space. In the meantime momentous developments have taken place

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

and outer space has been transformed - mainly as a consequence of the cold war - into a heavily militarized zone. Today, military satellites have become an indispensable means for the control of terrestrial movements and installations and have played a critical role in military actions of the recent past.

The question of whether this constitutes a "peaceful" use according to the terms of the Outer Space Treaty has remained without a definite answer. One has thus come to comply with the de facto situation accepting as "peaceful" a use which, even if it serves military purposes, is in itself non-aggressive. This factual acquiescence makes sense in so far as observation satellites are going to be indispensable for peacekeeping objectives and the verification of arms control treaties. Add to this the fact that the rapid progress in technology has all but obliterated the difference between civil and military satellites. Today, many countries employ satellites which in technical terms are so similar to military reconnaissance satellites that they might also be used for military surveillance purposes.

At this juncture, we would be well advised to recognize the increased risk of conflict inherent in the proliferation of high-technology weapons with considerable aggressive potential if directed against terrestrial or space-based targets. We are therefore convinced of the need to address these issues linked with the risk of weaponization of outer space in the CD in a coherent manner and review those gaps and loopholes in existing legal instruments that need to be closed in order to preclude the possibility of military conflicts in, or including, outer space. It is our strong belief that this issue cannot be further postponed. The option to run programmes for using or even testing weapons systems in outer space must be excluded before they have reached the stage where it gets difficult to stop them.

In accordance with resolution 53/76 of the fifty-third United Nations General Assembly, adopted without a negative vote, we call upon the CD to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space as soon as possible. We welcome the systematic preparatory work by last year's Special Coordinator, Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka, and urge the members of the Conference to finalize the examination of the mandate to be proposed.

With regard to conventional arms control, the accumulation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms has given rise to a mounting expression of concern by governments and civil society. Countless are the victims, mostly amongst civilians, who have suffered or are still suffering every day under the impact of the destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons are the real killers nowadays. Of the 49 conflicts fought in the early 1990s, 46 were fought with small arms only. Their disastrous legacy effectively blocks rehabilitation in a post-conflict situation, hampers economic and social progress and puts international peace and stability at stake.

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In order to come to grips with this very complex situation, due to both unrestrained supply and demand, the international community is facing a new and complex challenge. Painstaking efforts are needed. Yet we are confident that progress is feasible. It is, first of all, necessary to carry on and speed up the work already in progress. A whole range of national and regional initiatives, seminars and workshops organized by governments, international organizations and NGOs alike demonstrate the importance attributed to the issue. This international movement of raising awareness has culminated so far in the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolutions 53/77 T on illicit traffic in small arms and 53/77 E on small arms. Let me also mention the good work done by the United Nations Secretary-General's second Panel of Governmental Experts, chaired by Ambassador Donowaki of Japan, which is currently meeting again in Geneva. Their recommendation will be of particular importance with regard to the preparation of the international conference which was called for by the last General Assembly to be held not later than 2001 to address international concerns in this area.

Further coordinated actions are clearly required at the international level. No fast or ready-made solution and certainly no quick fix is in sight. In our view the focus of our attention should be threefold.

First: addressing the threat caused by illicit arms trading in all its aspects through appropriate measures at the national, regional and international levels. It will therefore be crucial to establish at the international level a conceptual and methodological platform from which to develop further a common understanding and a concerted approach. Work is already going on in several forums. Here I am referring to OAS and OSCE, as well as the negotiations following the recommendation of the United Nations Crime Prevention Commission on a protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition and other related materials. Work in this field will, in our view, also have to include necessary restrictions with regard to the supply of specific categories of small arms and light weapons to recipients other than governments.

Second: efficient legal, administrative and practical measures taken at the national and regional levels in order to strengthen controls on the legal arms trade. This is all the more important as we are dealing with weapons which are relatively widespread as they are easy and cheap to produce. Arms-supplying countries, producers as well as transit countries, must recognize their particular responsibility and should be determined to follow high common standards for the management of, and restraint in, conventional arms transfers. Presently there exist some 300 producers of small arms in around 50 different countries. Should one country cease its exports, substitutes are easily available. Or to put it differently: one country's virtue can and will be another country's profit unless the motives of profit are subordinated to humanitarian ones.

Third: determined action in the field in order to assist victims to redress critical situations and to create the conditions for sustainable peace and socio-economic development. These measures include the demobilization and disarming of combatants, weapons collection, their safe storage and

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destruction as well as reintegration incentives and re-establishment of a local culture of peace. Governments have to rethink their arms exports policies and should also take the small arms problem into account with regard to their bilateral development cooperation. The challenge exists for multilateral donor organizations, too, especially the international financial institutions, which are increasingly paying attention to these aspects in their lending policies Only an integrated approach promises to be successful in the long run. Otherwise, the "peace dividend" will remain an illusion and will never be collected.

The European Union has already started to address these issues in a systematic manner. In June 1997 the EU adopted a Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms designed to address the problem of illicit trafficking in conventional arms. It provides for enhanced law enforcement cooperation and information exchange as well as assistance to other countries in preventing and combating the illicit trafficking of arms.

In June 1998 the EU adopted the Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, which addresses the problem of ethical and political standards to be applied to legal arms transfers.

These two major instruments, which are politically binding, do not specifically address the problem of accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons as such. The European Union has therefore adopted, as one of the last and most significant measures under the Austrian presidency on 17 December 1998, a Joint Action on combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons.

With this instrument, the European Union commits itself to build consensus in the relevant regional and international forums, in particular the United Nations and OSCE, and among affected States in the fight against the destabilizing proliferation of small arms.

The Joint Action provides for financial and technical assistance to specific programmes and projects in affected countries, including by the United Nations other international organizations, ICRC and by NGOs. Such EU funding would apply inter alia to assistance for weapons collection, security sector reform and demobilization and reintegration, as well as specific victim assistance programmes. The disbursement of such funds by the European Union will, however, be conditional on the recipient's commitment to preventing the destabilizing accumulation of small arms.

So far the CD has stayed clear of these questions. Yet it appears legitimate to ask why our efforts on transparency in armaments exclude small arms. Why couldn't we draw inspiration from the EU's approach and look at the possibility of a code of conduct on arms transfers, including small arms? With these ideas in mind, we support the continuation of the CD's work on TIA, be it in the form of a Special Coordinator or an ad hoc committee. While we support a thorough review of the United Nations's Register on Conventional Arms, we also lend our voice to addressing the issue of small arms in a

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systematic fashion in the CD. We feel that the time has come to show that the CD can contribute to a matter which is of general concern and where an international standard is urgently needed.

Next Monday, on 1 March, the Ottawa Convention on the Total Ban of Anti-Personnel Mines will enter into force. Faster than any comparable international treaty, the Ottawa Convention has reached the required threshold of 40 ratifications. Today, 133 States are signatories and 64 have already concluded their national ratification process. Not only those impressive numbers, but also what has been achieved over the last months in combating the global anti-personnel mines crisis, testifies to the significance and success of this Convention. And the momentum towards increased international cooperation and universalization will become manifest again at the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo, where Austria hopes to see States parties, signatories and non-signatories alike.

What are the implications of those developments for our work at the CD? Certainly there is no need to renegotiate such a comprehensive instrument of international law as the Ottawa Convention. Negotiation of a free-standing new legal instrument dealing exclusively with a transfer ban, even in a fully compatible way with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention, would raise a number of political and legal problems, such as lack of global vocation, setting a precedent by negotiating a partial ban after a clear majority of States has signed a comprehensive one, proliferation of legal instruments dealing with the same content, just to name a few.

I do not say this to disparage the idea of transforming the unilateral export ban decisions taken by most remaining anti-personnel mines producers into an obligation binding under international law. I see the merit of such a concept, but the adequate legal framework for it exists already. The amended Protocol II of the CCWC contains a qualified transfer ban. What would be more logical than to broaden this provision in the course of the CCWC review process?

Before concluding, let me refer to an item of unfinished business that we should be able to solve without further delay, namely, the next step in our phased process of expansion suggested by Special Coordinator Ambassador Hofer, to which we lend our full support. We therefore hope that we will soon be able to welcome Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia in our midst.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Majoor.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands): Mr. President, since it is the first time during your tenure that I take the floor, I should like to express the great satisfaction of my delegation and myself to see you at the helm of the CD. With your experience and skill I hope and expect you to be able to move the CD towards substantive work. I should also like to take this opportunity to

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thank the Secretary-General of the CD, Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy, Abdelkader Bensmail, and all other members of the CD secretariat for their invaluable support to us and for their unflagging enthusiasm for the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation. I also warmly welcome our new colleagues from Colombia, Argentina, Slovakia, Sweden and Indonesia. I hope that they will have a productive stay in terms of tangible work and substantive achievements in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The subject of my intervention today is nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; the immediate cause for my intervention is the dilatory way in which we so far address these issues; and the purpose is to give a modest contribution in trying to move the debate forward.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain cornerstones of the global international security structure and a priority on the global disarmament agenda. The objectives, as set out in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and in the "Principles and objectives" of 1995, have not yet been reached. Upon all of us rests the duty to try to achieve in every possible way the ultimate goal that we have set ourselves: a world free of nuclear weapons. This objective cannot be reached at one stroke, but should be realized in a series of well-considered steps. And even a world free of nuclear weapons does not by itself mean a world in peace! For that to become a reality much more needs to be done in parallel. For the world to be secure it needs to be - verifiably - free of all weapons of mass destruction. In this context, the Netherlands is honoured to host OPCW and would welcome also the Organization for the Prohibition of Biological Weapons to The Hague. For the world to be safe all States need to be at the lowest possible level of conventional armaments; and most importantly, there needs to be trust, confidence and openness at all levels within countries, between countries, in regions and in the world as a whole, as well as respect for international norms and democratic values.

The challenge is to work on all those aspects of security in parallel, without keeping one hostage to the other; to work on them in the CD, but not necessarily only there. We need to assess carefully all the time where and how we best can move forward on each of the subjects at hand or aspects thereof. Discussions and - where applicable - negotiations in the relevant multilateral forums, in regional contexts and at the bi- or plurilateral level should complement and reinforce each other and not hinder or block.

For 42 months now we have been trying to move the CD to substantive work. And although I sense considerable flexibility on all sides of this room, the various pieces simply do not want to fall into place. The CD is rapidly losing credibility; at a time when opportunities for and challenges to disarmament and non-proliferation take turns, the CD must be at the centre of international efforts to keep the international community on the right track and to steer it to new imaginative approaches to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The CD cannot sit by idly. If a work programme is so difficult to agree upon, why do we not apply the same approach as we do with respect to the agenda of the CD? If there is no agreement on a new work programme in the first four weeks of the CD's annual session, we should simply

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decide to adopt the work programme of the previous year, on the explicit understanding that each subject can be brought up and changes and additions can be agreed upon in the course of the CD sessions. If it is generally accepted that Special Coordinators are an effective mechanism to develop common understanding, why do we not give the CD President discretionary powers to nominate a Special Coordinator with a simple standard mandate, when he needs help in the search for common ground on how to proceed on a particular subject in the CD? Not every procedural decision aiming at facilitating the search for consensus should have to be taken by consensus.

On 13 August last year the CD finally decided to start negotiations on a fissile material treaty that would prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. That decision was taken more than three years after the "Principles and objectives" were agreed in the Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, three years also after the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein were approved in the CD. The joy was great: the CD had broken out of its impasse; finally it would do what it is supposed to do, namely, treaty negotiations. It even managed to agree on a very competent chairman for the first part of the negotiations, Ambassador Moher. All was set. We are now 197 days later, a little over half a year, and still we have not started.

We join those countries that do wish the fissile material treaty negotiations to start without further delay. While the CTBT is widely seen as the qualitative end of the nuclear arms race, a prohibition on the production of fissile material can be seen as the quantitative end thereof, in the sense that it will cap the amount of fissile material available for military purposes worldwide. We see that as an important further step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We regard it as a significant multilateral endeavour, in which nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States together try to diminish nuclear danger by agreeing on a production ban and on an international verification regime. The treaty would engage non-parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in a crucial undertaking in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, including its verification arrangements. And finally, it would extend the safeguards system to materials and facilities in the nuclear-weapon States, whereas now safeguard arrangements with these States are on a voluntary basis. We regard, in sum, a fissile material treaty as an important strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and a meaningful and necessary step on the road to complete nuclear disarmament.

The Netherlands will take a constructive approach to the negotiations and will develop its detailed position as the negotiating process goes along. We do not want to fix our views prematurely in order to keep the necessary flexibility. As general policy guidelines we believe: that the prohibition of the production of fissile material for explosive purposes requires effective and at the same time cost-effective international verification, with IAEA in a pivotal role; that a fissile material treaty must be of a universal and non-discriminatory nature and encompass all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States and the non-parties to the NPT; and that the fissile material treaty is only one further step towards nuclear disarmament, in which not all concerns with respect to fissile material can be met at the same time.

(Mr. Major, Netherlands)

Although my country does understand the wish to discuss existing stocks of fissile material, we would favour efforts to negotiate first a treaty on the prohibition of future production. We favour that because we are convinced that only such an approach can lead to timely results. At the same time we should encourage nuclear-weapon States to put under safeguards their excess nuclear material resulting from nuclear reduction programmes. In this context we welcome the Trilateral Initiative by the United States, the Russian Federation and the IAEA on fissile material that is no longer required for defence purposes and the ongoing effort of developing a model verification agreement. These are essential measures that should ensure that these materials cannot be returned to nuclear weapons programmes, guaranteeing the irreversibility of this process. We fully agree with the Norwegian State Secretary when she said last week that excess material that is removed from the military production cycle should no longer have the status of military non-verifiable material, but gradually be made subject to a transparent, non-military and civilian regime subject to international verification. It could be part of a separate framework, in which measures can be discussed that enhance transparency and confidence in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The prohibition on the production of fissile material should be verified internationally and effectively, including a mechanism that covers undeclared facilities. Many delegations expressed the view that a verification regime should focus on enrichment and reprocessing plants, since these are the essential production facilities for weapons-usable fissile material. This focused approach would also be the most cost-effective one. My delegation agrees with that but would, on the other hand, not exclude a wider approach. We believe that we should have a closer look not only at other installations such as hot cells, but also at new verification methods that are not related to specific installations, such as wide area environmental monitoring. They might have to be included in the verification arrangements. IAEA has already gained some experience with environmental sampling and is entitled to use this method under the Additional Safeguards Protocol. In a later phase - as a part of a process of convergence of verification regimes under the NPT and the fissile material treaty - we would not exclude reactors and other installations that are capable of producing weapons-usable fissile material, both in nuclear-weapons States and non-nuclear-weapons States, to fall under one international non-discriminatory verification regime. But that is certainly beyond the scope of our present deliberations.

The negotiation of a fissile material treaty is not the only nuclear issue in the CD. There are a number of proposals from all corners that have in common that they would allow the CD to discuss nuclear disarmament in a broader context. My delegation believes that it would be useful to establish in the CD a mechanism that would allow for exchange of information and of views on nuclear disarmament. Together with Belgium, Germany, Italy and Norway, the Netherlands therefore proposed to establish in the CD a working group for that purpose. This proposal is not an end in itself: it leaves all options open for the future. But as far as we can see it is the only mechanism that could lead to a consensus on how the CD should deal with nuclear disarmament at this stage. We hope that all delegations will show

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just that amount of flexibility that would allow the CD to move forward on this issue on the basis of this proposal, that is a true attempt to capture the common ground in this body.

Coming to the end of my intervention, I would like to make three more remarks on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a wider context.

First, we would like to express our strong support for the unilateral and bilateral undertakings in the field of nuclear weapons reductions by the United States and Russia and by France and the United Kingdom. We support the START process and fervently hope that the Duma will ratify START II without further delay, and that negotiations on a START III will soon begin, as envisaged at the summit meeting in Helsinki in 1997. Both the United States and Russia defend the bilateral approach to nuclear weapons reductions as the most effective and promising one. My delegation agrees with that, provided that the agreements reached are ratified and implemented.

Secondly, it is in all our interest that nothing is done to undermine the present nuclear disarmament efforts and the non-proliferation regime. This goes for all countries without any discrimination, members and non-members of the NPT alike. The nuclear tests in South Asia reminded us of the vulnerability of the non-proliferation regime. We call on all countries to sign and ratify the CTBT and to accede to the NPT without any preconditions; their accession to these treaties is a prerequisite on the road to nuclear disarmament. We are encouraged by the recent summit meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, and regard it as a hopeful sign that both sides indicated that they would like to move away from a regional nuclear arms race.

My third and last point relates to the review process of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The second PrepCom failed for a number of reasons on which I do not want to dwell at this point. It is my Government's view that we can ill afford the third PrepCom to fail as well. We do not belong to the cynics who believe that the best products are produced by chaos. My delegation would like the 2000 NPT Review Conference to result in a forward-looking document, an adapted version of the "Principles and objectives", including a new programme of action for the five years following the 2000 Review Conference. We would also welcome - as a part of this document or as a separate document - an elaboration of how we will be undertaking the strengthened review process in the years ahead. And we expect the Conference to produce a factual report on the implementation of the Treaty and the "Principles and objectives" of 1995. We hope that the next PrepCom will be able to agree on the procedural issues that will allow the Review Conference to run smoothly. At the same time, we do expect the PrepCom to continue its substantive work by further developing common ground on elements that can be used for the final documents of the Review Conference. We believe that the Chairman's paper No. 2 provides a good basis for further work in this respect.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference at this critical juncture. You have already displayed considerable diplomatic acumen in initiating and guiding the consultation process designed to evolve consensus on a balanced programme of work for the Conference. My delegation will continue to extend its cooperation and support to you in bringing this process to an early and successful conclusion. We are as ready, if not as anxious, as others to get down to substantive work in the CD.

I would like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States, for the expeditious way in which he accomplished the inevitable initial step of approving our annual agenda. Although Ambassador Grey did not "tilt at windmills", his forthright approach to the CD's work programme has created the basis upon which you will no doubt be able to build a broad consensus.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, and his able deputy, Mr. Bensmail, for the assistance extended to our delegation throughout the last year and this year.

I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to welcome all our new colleagues in the Conference. At the same time, our joy coexists with considerable sadness because of the departure of two dear and outstanding colleagues, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois of France and Ambassador John Campbell of Australia.

The Pakistan delegation believes that the contributions made by Ambassador Bourgois to multilateral disarmament must be acknowledged in a more permanent manner than the accolades bestowed on her at numerous farewell gatherings. Therefore, I wish to read the following into the record of the Conference on Disarmament:

"Joëlle Bourgois, the Ambassador of France,
Arrived amongst us, in an emergency, from Pretoria,
To reject the attacks on the final testing in Mururoa,
She defended, with panache, this French cause,
And then, almost without a pause,
Was authorized to announce; Perhaps through gritted teeth,
That France would be the first to support Ramaker's CTBT.

"Since then, Joëlle emerged, as the voice of Logic and Reason,
And of Nuclear Non-proliferation.
Pressing for the early start of 'Cut-off',
She even advocated;
One does not know if with great confidence,
the provision, only to NPT parties, of
Negative Security Assurance.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan

"Yet, reflecting the principles of Clausewitz,
Joëlle also explained to the uninitiated, the essentials of
nuclear deterrence,
Although, to her dismay,
After the tests of May,
This thesis gained new adherence.

"Now, even as we are about to start,
Work on the Agenda she set out,
Joëlle is to depart.
She will go home,
To a Club more exclusive than our own,
To propose a multipolar solution,
To the ills created by hyper-power globalization."

Ambassador Campbell has strategically chosen this day to depart Geneva and thus is unavailable to receive our final benedictions. We have refrained from adding an ode to him because, in our traditions, the only suitable male subjects of poetry are either brutal conquerors or dead saints! But we wish Ambassador Campbell all the best.

I have asked for the floor today to offer some views on the two issues on which some course of action needs to be agreed in the Conference on Disarmament, that is, nuclear disarmament and outer space.

The Pakistan delegation has, on several occasions, especially in the United Nations General Assembly, outlined its substantive position and approach to the highest-priority goal of nuclear disarmament. We are gravely concerned at recent developments in this arena: the obvious desire of some if not all the "nuclear-weapon States" to indefinitely retain and progressively enhance their nuclear weapons capabilities; the espousal of nuclear doctrines which envisage the use, including first use, of nuclear weapons, including against non-nuclear-weapon States; the non-implementation of important arms reduction agreements between the major nuclear Powers; and the initiation of active programmes to develop "anti-missile shields" which are likely to destabilize global and regional nuclear stability and possibly escalate into a new spiral in the nuclear and missile race around the world.

These concerns need to be effectively addressed by the international community, especially the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. There is no confusion in our minds as to the work which the CD could undertake in the field of nuclear disarmament. It could, among other things: conclude - rapidly - a convention committing all States to the elimination of nuclear weapons, hopefully within a relatively short period of time; negotiate a protocol to the CTBT to monitor non-explosive nuclear testing to effectively prevent the further development and refinement of nuclear weapons; evolve an agreement involving all member States and alliance systems to firstly "de-alert" and progressively "de-couple" nuclear warheads and delivery systems, and adopt other "confidence-building" measures similar to suggestions made in the context of containing nuclear escalation in South Asia; identify other measures to halt and progressively

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

reverse nuclear and missile development on a global basis; and discuss and evolve an agreed programme or plan of action to make progress towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Pakistan delegation acknowledges that agreement to negotiate on such measures involves difficult national security issues for the nuclear-weapon Powers and their allies. But these issues are no more difficult than the ones which, for instance, Pakistan is asked to take decisions on in the context of the fissile material treaty. Therefore, we cannot accept the proposition that the Conference on Disarmament is not entitled to undertake multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. What, then, are the negotiations on the FMT? Are they, as many of us suspect, designed only to promote non-proliferation, and not nuclear disarmament?

In this context, I must express my concern that new preconditions are being posed for nuclear disarmament - for example, what we have just heard from our distinguished colleague from the Netherlands, that accession to the CTBT, and even the NPT, "is a prerequisite on the road to nuclear disarmament." That, unfortunately, will remain a bridge too far.

The Pakistan delegation therefore fully subscribes to the proposal of the Group of 21 to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. However, we are prepared to move towards our aim of initiating nuclear disarmament negotiations in the CD in a graduated process. The "troika" mechanism has served its purpose. We should now look at the various proposals which envisage different kinds of mechanisms and mandates on nuclear disarmament and evolve agreement on an approach that is generally acceptable but also effective in addressing this item which enjoys the highest priority.

In the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the international community made the solemn pledge that "the exploration and use of outer space ... shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind".

This "province of mankind" is today under the threat of being transformed into yet another arena for military competition and escalation with the aim of achieving the ultimate instruments for complete global domination. Self-styled "stewards for military space" are seeking to dominate the "space dimension of military operations" and of "integrating space forces into war-fighting capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict". Responsible officials belonging to a major military Power have declared categorically that "we have signed no treaty saying we would not weaponize space".

Even the Treaty which has until now had a crucial restraining effect on the otherwise irrational nuclear arms race between the two super-Powers, the ABM Treaty, faces an uncertain future. Moreover, theatre missile defences (TMD) are planned to be established nationally and in several sensitive regions of the world.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

The militarization of outer space and the establishment of TMD systems have global as well as regional implications for both nuclear disarmament and further proliferation of nuclear weapons. There are at least three major areas of concern. First, the militarization of outer space which is being pursued by certain quarters will be inevitably perceived as designed to achieve global domination and thus provoke new strategic antagonisms. The absence of global rivalry among the major Powers may be replaced by new, dangerous and destabilizing confrontations.

Second, the emplacement of TMD systems, with or without integrating them with systems deployed in space, could provide one side with a quantum military advantage over potential adversaries. Their response may be to enlarge their nuclear delivery systems. Nuclear stability would be seriously eroded. Nuclear disarmament efforts would come to a standstill. It is obvious from the statements made by some important Powers that they will not view such developments with equanimity. Whether space is exploited to support the creation of defensive shields against missile attacks, or used for deployment of weapons which aim at ground targets, the fundamental strategic balances between the major Powers will be severely affected. The result will be the same - an arms race in outer space and, most likely, a new nuclear arms race on terra firma.

In this context, it is evident that the possible revision or abrogation of obligations arising from the ABM Treaty is an issue of the most immediate concern. It could impinge not only on the START process but also produce unforeseen consequences for the CTBT as well as the FMT. It will erode global confidence in the permanence of solemn commitments for nuclear and arms restraint accepted and sanctified in legally binding treaties and commitments.

Third, the legitimization of missile defence systems by one or more Powers will have serious consequences for regional security, including in South Asia, which is now nuclearized. Deployment of ballistic missiles could no doubt be destabilizing, especially in South Asia, because of short flight times and assured deliverability. Pakistan has advanced proposals to promote a "strategic restraint regime" and maintain deterrence at the lowest possible level in South Asia. However, the acquisition and deployment of missile defences by either side would destabilize deterrence and escalate reliance on offensive systems, especially missiles. Even worse, it could place a premium on a first-strike capability and doctrines designed to neutralize the vulnerability created by the adversary's missile defences.

Pakistan therefore believes that it is timely for the CD to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The CD dealt with this issue, including in an Ad Hoc Committee, until 1994, when the creation of "linkages" prevented its re-establishment. It is time now to undo the effects of this "original" linkage. We hope that your informal consultations will enable agreement to be achieved on a suitable mandate which would enable the Ad Hoc Committee to address the various aspects of the issue to which my delegation has referred in this statement.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

The Pakistan delegation will avail itself of an early opportunity to respond to a number of interesting, if controversial, statements we have heard, including today, on the fissile materials treaty whose negotiations are to commence soon in this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Hofer.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, this is the first time my delegation has had the honour to take the floor under your presidency. On this occasion allow me to extend my congratulations to you and to pledge to you the full support of the Swiss delegation in the discharge of your duties. Bearing in mind your experience, your many high-level duties within the international community in Geneva and your knowledge of the law of nations, our Conference is certainly in good hands. I wish you every success in restarting the work of the Conference both in terms of its enlargement and in terms of substance. I also take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States, who so soundly laid the foundations for the decisions which, we hope, the CD will adopt very shortly.

On this occasion, I would also like to pay tribute to our colleague Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois, the head of the French delegation, who is attending her last meeting with us today, at least during her current term. Her contributions have greatly enlivened, inspired and enriched our work. As the representative of the host State, I should also like to thank Ambassador Bourgois for her highly appreciated professional and personal commitment in favour of the international status of Geneva, thus showing that this location is in a way our common property as diplomats and representatives to the CD. Madam Ambassador, our best wishes go with you.

Today I have the opportunity to address our Conference to convey to it a few considerations relating to the follow-up to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. In conformity with the Final Declaration adopted in Geneva in May 1996, in the context of the Review Conference, a further review conference is scheduled to meet in 2001. It is precisely in this connection that my statement will focus and convey to you our concerns regarding the problems of projectiles and their traumatic effects. Even as I speak certain small-calibre arms systems are still producing the traumatic effect of what are known as "dumdum" bullets, causing grave bodily injury. It is true that a number of provisions of international law in the area of disarmament as well as in the humanitarian area address this very issue. Hence it is up to those responsible for international negotiations as well as experts to consider whether these provisions are still appropriate. In order to respect the spirit that inspired the drawing up of the 1980 Convention, international law will have to be adapted where necessary, taking into account current technical developments.

(Mr. Hofer, Switzerland)

It is broadly established that gaps persist and that they can be filled. To this end it is therefore desirable to establish and adopt common criteria and standards in the area of ballistics as well as in the medical and legal areas. In order to realize the aim of the Final Declaration of May 1996, my authorities organized a first international seminar on ballistics in October 1997 in Thun, near Bern, which prompted keen interest. In order to repeat this experience, Switzerland intends to hold another such event. Thus the second seminar of this kind will take place in Thun on 23 and 24 March next. One representative per State participating, in any capacity, in the Conference on Disarmament, or from among the States parties to the 1980 Convention, as well as some representatives of non-governmental organizations particularly interested in this field, will be invited to this colloquium. My authorities hope that this meeting will be in a position to constitute an appropriate platform to continue and delve further into technical debate. The aim will be, inter alia, to develop a methodology for ballistic testing which could prove useful with a view to the forthcoming review conference to be held in 2001. I would like to draw the attention of delegates present here to the fact that our invitation, which was recently communicated to the missions in Geneva, was also sent to their capitals through Swiss diplomatic channels. It remains for us to hope that international awareness will emerge in order to limit and protect civilian populations as well as soldiers of present and future generations from needless suffering inflicted by such weapons systems. To this end I can only endorse the thoughts expressed by the State Secretary of Norway, Mrs. Aaslaug Haga, who made a statement before this Conference last Thursday, and for whom the question of conventional weapons remains one of her major concerns.

As was stated by the State Secretary, I should like to draw the attention of all delegations, members and observers alike, to Mozambique's invitation to the informal meeting that will take place next Monday, 1 March, to prepare for the Maputo Conference on the Ottawa Convention. This Conference, mentioned this morning by Ambassador Kreid, will place particular emphasis on action against mines, mine clearance and assistance to mine victims. To this end all States have been invited to participate by the United Nations Secretary-General, who is the depositary of the convention. In this way, with a view to next Monday's informal meeting, all the missions in Geneva have received from Mozambique a complete set of documents and a detailed programme.

To conclude, Switzerland also considers that the question of weapons of mass destruction remains a priority issue in disarmament and arms control efforts. Though their destructive effects are not directly felt, their destructive potential nonetheless constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security. Hence it is high time for our institution to get back down to work and to begin substantive negotiations on this issue, on the basis of the progress accomplished at the last session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Switzerland for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would now like to call on the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Draganov.

Mr. DRAGANOV (Bulgaria): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the CD and assure you of my delegation's full support in the exercise of your demanding duties. I would also like to express my gratitude for the good work done by your predecessors, Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States and Ambassador Ian Soutar of the United Kingdom, to lead this Conference on a constructive track. Our tribute also goes to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, as well as to the secretariat, for their professionalism and competent cooperation.

Let me use the occasion to welcome all our new colleagues who have recently joined the Conference and to bid farewell to our outgoing distinguished colleague from France, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois, with whom I have had the special privilege of working together in the same diplomatic corps twice in a row now. I wish her good health and success in all her future endeavours. My best wishes also go to Ambassador John Campbell, with whom I was particularly honoured to work as officially part of the company of the representatives listed below.

I have asked for the floor to make a statement relating to anti-personnel landmines (APLs) on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela.

These States consider that the Conference on Disarmament has a clear mandate to address conventional disarmament issues. As part of this mandate, we believe the CD has a role to play in strengthening the existing international regime against anti-personnel landmines. This would involve the negotiation of a ban on the transfer of APLs, as a complement to existing international agreements on APLs. There is an expectation that the CD will undertake this work, as evidenced by the strong support accorded to United Nations General Assembly resolution 52/38 H, which invites the CD to intensify its efforts on APLs.

It is with great pleasure that we note the entry into force of amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons or the CCW and the imminent entry into force of the Ottawa Convention. These instruments represent major achievements. However, many historical users, producers and exporters of APLs who are also members of the CD are for the moment not in a position to accede to the Ottawa Convention or the CCW. An APL transfer ban negotiated by the entire CD membership would therefore bring these countries at least some of the way towards the goal of a total APL ban, and in due course encourage increased participation in existing international instruments. It would moreover play an important role in stemming the supply of APLs, by significantly reducing the availability of these weapons, which

(Mr. Draganov, Bulgaria)

continue to have tragic humanitarian consequences in many regions of the world. The task of implementing a global regime against landmines would be enhanced if we pursued a transfer ban within the CD.

We believe negotiation of a transfer ban in the CD would have a number of compelling advantages. It would, from the beginning, cover all types of anti-personnel landmines. Such negotiations would also involve, from the outset, the relevant States not yet party to the Ottawa Convention or the CCW. These negotiations would, we believe, represent another irreversible step forward in the universalization of the global fight against landmines. A further advantage of the CD negotiating a transfer ban is that it has the capacity to get down to work on this issue immediately, and achieve an expeditious completion of the negotiations.

According to the proposals currently before the Conference, a consensus exists in favour of the reappointment of a CD Special Coordinator on APLs. On this basis, the CD should move quickly to capitalize on the consensus and reappoint a Special Coordinator to carry forward the work on this important issue, with a view to the early establishment of an ad hoc committee, given the broad support demonstrated within the CD for that course of action.

A document containing the views of the countries mentioned above will be submitted to the secretariat for issuance as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I would like now to call on the representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from Spanish): Thank you very much for your kind words, Mr. President. Allow me to extend to you my best wishes for success in your difficult task.

(continued in French)

You are taking the Chair of our Conference at a crucial moment. The adoption of the programme of work seems to be still beyond reach. However, there has already been enough crossing of swords on various sides to ensure that no one can have the impression of having sacrificed a national position for the sake of objectives dictated by others. Soon the need for action should lead all of us to resign ourselves to what is possible. On the table is the plat de résistance: the FMCT negotiations. It is an unappetizing dish. Some find it a meagre offering. The others are afraid of choking on it. No one wants to try it. Hence it is the ideal recipe for the Conference on Disarmament, which differs completely in that respect from the most renowned restaurants. The accompaniment to this plat de résistance is familiar: security assurances, preferably prepared by an internationally famous chef, the Ambassador of Mexico. Add a teaspoonful of discussion on the other nuclear disarmament issues and a soupçon of outer space, to please the Ambassador of the United States of America. Sprinkle with some anti-personnel mines. Cook on a very low heat.

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

But I am straying from my purpose today, which is not to sit down to a meal with you but to say my farewells. Farewell to my colleagues, from the oldest to the new arrivals. The old ones have become friends - I might even say accomplices. The new wave has brought with it promises of friendship which will be realized one day or another. Farewell to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. I have appreciated the fact that he is always available in case of need, as well as his discretion and his prudence on matters with which he is more familiar than any of us. We are indebted to him in part for the fact that our body has remained in Geneva and has been strengthened.

My thanks also to the Deputy Secretary-General, Abdelkader Bensmail, who draws his thorough knowledge of the workings of this body from the many years he has spent in it. I also thank the efficient United Nations press service run by Thérèse Gastaut with an iron hand in a velvet glove. Thanks to our interpreters for their dedication and their faithful presence at hectic moments. Special thanks to those who translate from French into the other languages of the Conference, and particularly into that international Esperanto which used to be British English. My friend the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, who is perfectly at home in French, could testify better than me to its hidden pitfalls. In a best-seller written by one of his compatriots, Peter Mayle, on Provence, I learned of the mental gymnastics imposed on our interpreters by an allegedly logical language:

> "Where is the logic, for instance, in the genders given to proper names and nouns? Why is the Rhone masculine and the Durance feminine? They are both rivers, and if they must have a sex, why can't it be the same one? ... Strange and unnatural events take place every day within the formalities of French syntax. A recent newspaper article, reporting on the marriage of the rock singer Johnny Halliday, paused in its description of the bride's frock to give Johnny a pat on the back. 'Il est', said the article, 'une grande vedette'. In the space of a single short sentence, the star had undergone a sex change, and on his wedding day too."

My thanks to the often invisible but always efficient staff of the secretariat. Thanks to the conference room staff who observe us without appearing to see us and who know how to look the other way when someone, myself in particular, behaves in a way at variance with the rules or customs.

I dare say this profusion of thanks will demonstrate to you that this departure - such an ordinary event in a diplomatic career - has a melancholy tinge. Certainly I would not have imagined three and a half years ago that I would miss more about the Palais des Nations than its correspondence to the descriptions of Albert Cohen in Belle du Seigneur; the dark and gilded frescoes of José María Sert, whose sombreness and violence evoked for me by way of ironic contrast the role his wife Misia was playing at that same moment in Paris life during the roaring twenties; and of course the sense of history conveyed without fail when one sat in the Council Chamber of the League of Nations.

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

In September 1995, the CTBT negotiations were at their height. France was doing all it could to speed up progress by completing its last series of nuclear tests. Far from acknowledging this move, however, my colleagues showered me with reproaches. They did so in a language in which I was not at home. It was not any of the working languages or official languages of the Conference. It was an idiom full of mysterious acronyms: PTBT, CTBT, CWC, SSOD-1, IMS, IDC, GSE, NTM, SBSSP, etc. An idiom riddled with pitfalls: PNE, zero yield, OSI, red light, green light, etc. But if the details were beyond me, the general thrust of it was clear. I represented a country in the wrong. As if a country could be in the wrong.

And moreover I was not a member of the club. I had come from a country, South Africa, which was not yet a member of the Conference on Disarmament. I was unknown to the battalion of strategists who exchanged signs of recognition between them: Vienna 1992, New York 1995. I was not on the lists of the PPNN, who did not yet invite me to their meetings. And when I left Geneva for New York and thought I would avoid the crossfire of Antonio de Icaza, Munir Zahran, Munir Akram, Mark Moher - to mention only those who are present here - I found myself on the other side of the Atlantic faced with resolution 50/70 A and Richard Butler.

There were, it is true, groups of the like-minded, the Fifteen, the P3, the P5, the Western group, sometimes known as the Barton Group or the Mason Group. But I would often have preferred the splendid isolation of the "group of one" to the solicitude of my friends. By chance, a very exclusive club which was not registered either in Geneva or in New York had allowed me to join. At the time, China, India and Mexico were members. It was the smokers' club, thanks to which, flying in the face of political correctness, I survived those difficult days. Not without forfeiting the sympathy of my neighbours, I admit. Wolfgang Hoffman did not have the kindly generosity of his successor, the German Ambassador Günther Seibert, who has the same opinion but suffers in silence. Today, even that small group has broken up as a result of the courtesy of Ambassador Changhe Li, the wisdom of Ambassador Savitri Kunadi and the prudence of Ambassador Antonio de Icaza. I therefore made sure that the French Government appointed as my successor an enthusiast not for a nuclear-weapon-free world, not yet, but for a smoke-free world.

Over these past three and a half years of intensive work (1995-1996), pause and reflection (1997), and painful gestation of a decision - the launching of the negotiations on a fissile material production ban, I have seen many faces of the Conference on Disarmament. France, after taking up its seat here, has for years been upholding the role, the competence, the specificity of the sole multilateral forum for negotiations in the field of disarmament. My personal experience, brief as it has been, leads me to think that if the Conference did not exist, it would have to be invented. Why?

Some believe that the Conference on Disarmament lost the reason for its existence with the end of the cold war. In 1995 we could still try to understand that type of theory. But was it not a form of Eurocentrism? The prevailing idea was that once the European continent had been reconciled, and the two largest Powers engaged in a strategic partnership, the world would

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

only have to gather up the peace dividend. However, the Middle East question has still not been settled. The nuclear tests carried out by India and then Pakistan have radically modified the picture in Asia. The arms race has shifted from the nuclear sphere to that of ballistic missiles. Africa, which is bristling with mines, is devastated by the misuse of small arms, a scourge in other regions of the world, too, including the all-too-close Balkans. The modifications in the ABM Treaty introduced by the United States and Russia have led many of us to question the soundness of the framework within which we are working here to construct legal tools for disarmament.

True, we have neither the power nor the ambition to address all these issues. But if international legislation on nuclear armament and conventional weapons is to be drawn up, in an attempt to safeguard humanity against the devastating effects of real or potential conflicts, where can that be done, if not here? The Conference, expanded from 37 members to 60, is certainly not universal. I acknowledge this all the more readily as France has always supported its expansion. But all the protagonists of the emerging world are gathered here: the North, the South, the East, the West, the nuclear Powers, the non-nuclear-weapon States, the Arab world, including Iraq, and Israel; NPT member States and non-members; the Ottawa signatories and the non-signatories; those who have signed the CTBT and those who have not yet done so. Involving the observers in the negotiations, securing United Nations General Assembly endorsement for those negotiations, help to reconcile representativeness and universality.

Some consider that consensus, which governs our work, is a source of inefficiency, and that it is the shadow cast by the veto. What if it is? What could be more democratic than a forum in which a super-Power - a "hyper-Power", as the French Minister for Foreign Affairs now calls it, by analogy with the hypermarkets which have dethroned the supermarkets in the sphere of mass retailing - can block a decision? But also a forum in which a country lacking the attributes of power can deny a bigger country the right to tackle an issue which is important to it. I have in mind, for example, space, on the one hand, or anti-personnel mines on the other. What, ultimately, would be the benefit of coercion by the majority? None of the States we represent is forced to sign any treaty. None is forced to ratify a treaty after signing it. Consensus is therefore the sole guarantee of the validity of an international agreement in an area of vital interest for States - that of their security.

The pool of expertise constituted by ourselves, our delegations, the experts on whom we can call, the secretariat, and UNIDIR, under the extraordinarily dynamic leadership of that exceptional pair, Patricia Lewis and Christophe Carle, is underestimated, belittled - in most cases, in fact, by the authorities of the countries we represent, a measure of how hard the diplomat's task is nowadays. It is true that the Ottawa Process displayed the suddenness and speed of an avalanche. I am proud of having supported it to the best of my ability because, as I said in Oslo at the closing of the negotiations, that Convention will stand as a symbol - a symbol of those moments in international life where reasons of State coincide with popular sentiment. But, if we were able to accept the illusion of getting to grips

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

with the issue of anti-personnel mines without excessive difficulty, what about nuclear testing? Or the production of fissile material? Or biological weapons? In this very forum I have witnessed redoubtable presentations concerning the energy released by a nuclear explosion. Some of us - and if he had not left me in the lurch today, I might have called on the services of the Ambassador of Egypt, who constitutes something of a communal memory for us all - some of us remember the demonstrations provided by Grigori Berdennikov during the final phase of the CTBT negotiations. There was no time at that stage to call on experts for help. We had to try to understand in order to provide support or to counter-attack. According to a French saying, war is too serious a matter to be left to generals. I would say that peace is too serious to be entrusted to technicians. Let us be our own experts.

Some consider that the permanent nature of the organization is the source of unacceptable waste at a time when budgetary austerity is being imposed on all countries and at a stage in our economic history which is haunted by the spectre of crisis and unemployment among both poor and rich. It is true that the repetition of certain arguments ad nauseam on all sides adds nothing to the debate. It is true that the lack of continuity in the programme of work from one year to the next gives us the feeling that time is being wasted. But close contact between minds and characters is ultimately a productive factor. It imposes mutual respect. It compels understanding. It forces us to observe certain rules: never take your partner or group by surprise, especially with a good idea; keep a prudent balance between limited consultations and transparency.

I recall the draft nuclear test-ban treaty prepared by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker of the Netherlands, after taking endless precautions and holding countless discussions, and placed before the Conference on 28 May 1996. Ambassador Akram, who had his reasons for doing so, said that it had "descended from heaven", which coming from him was no compliment, at least that day. I remember my friend the Ambassador of India, Arundati Ghose, denouncing with matchless skill the "hall with trick mirrors" in which we were all moving, with her in first place. Conversely, I was bewildered by a number of compliments to my "sincerity", my "honesty", my "clarity", my "Cartesian spirit". I was very elegantly accused of the negotiator's worst professional failing - frankness. Overall, however, this daily contact between minds and characters fosters compromise and allows complex negotiations to reach a conclusion. Whatever the political differences and technical difficulties involved in verifying the ban on biological weapons, matters would progress faster if the ad hoc group was a standing body instead of meeting sporadically. Some may be pleased that the situation is not arranged in that way. Others, including my country, may deplore it. That is how things are.

In this forum, the international community has a tool for dialogue. The existence of the Conference on Disarmament is in itself a confidence-building measure which nothing could replace. Let us not accuse the institution of defects or shortcomings which are in fact our own. Conversely, let us not feel guilty at a lack of political will or a degree of indifference on the part of NGOs and the media - who are in fact our most valuable source of help

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

and to whom I wish to pay tribute - regarding certain issues which, in our view, are of fundamental importance. The production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is less meaningful to the man in the street than explosions are. Yet it constitutes the heart of the issue, in every sense of the term. The militarization of space is not a matter for much concern, except to science fiction writers, on the eve of the next millennium. Yet it is a dream that could become a nightmare. In short, let us keep the Conference on Disarmament as a tool and let us remember at the same time that, as we say in my country, "The most beautiful girl in the world can only offer what she has".

I can see that I have let myself get carried away. I was unable to avoid the trap. Those who urged me to revive a tradition that had fallen into disuse, the farewell speech, did so in a spirit of friendship which was certainly tinged with mischief. And I have just provided them with a final proof of my naivety. It is of no importance. Without realizing it, without intending to, I have found myself expressing what a philosopher in the age of the Enlightenment, Montesquieu, called the general spirit of a nation. France prefers "straight talking" to what is "politically correct". Geographically, it belongs to the North, but its heart draws it to the South. It has friends, it has allies, but it grants no Power and no group the right to dictate its conduct. It favours a multipolar world, which it views as a better guarantee of politico-strategic balance and cultural pluralism. It likes to challenge conventional ideas. It mistrusts prejudices, even its own. This esprit francais was defined by one of our colleagues, better known for his literary works than for his achievements in the field of diplomacy, Jean Giraudoux, in a play, L'impromptu de Paris, in 1938. I will leave with you the fruit of his reflection: "Excuse my mirth when I hear it proclaimed that France's destiny is to be the instrument of restraint and level-headedness on Earth! France's destiny is to unsettle the world". Unsettling the established order often offers the best promise of progress.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of France for her statement and the kind words she addressed to the Chair.

The informal consultations we held on Tuesday in this room enabled us to make a little more progress in the process of adoption of our programme of work by identifying with greater clarity the areas, the spaces for agreement and the points on which the required consensus has not yet been attained. We have been able to observe the desire of one and all to show the greatest flexibility, which is essential for the adoption of our programme. But I have to say that serious additional efforts are required to reach our goal. In the next few days I intend to continue my efforts in the search for solutions acceptable to all on the two items which, as we all know, have not been settled: nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which will enable us finally to get down to substantive consideration of our work. In this regard I hope to secure some results which I will submit to you in due course.

Before adjourning this meeting I must inform you that as a consequence of Zimbabwe's decision not to occupy the Chair during the period from 24 May

(The President)

to 20 June 1999, in conformity with rule 9 of our rules of procedure, the presidency of the Conference for the rest of the session will be occupied as follows: Viet Nam from 15 March to 23 May; Algeria from 24 May to 20 June; Argentina from 21 June to 15 August; and Australia from 16 August to 31 December 1999.

Does any delegation wish to speak? If not, I propose to adjourn the meeting and point out that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 4 March at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.817
4 March 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 4 March 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Rodríguez Cedeño (Venezuela)

GE.99-60811 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 817th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I wish to extend the warmest welcome to the new colleagues who are joining us - Ambassador Sipho Georges Nene, the representative of South Africa, and Ambassador Hubert de La Fortelle, the representative of France. You may count on our full support and cooperation, your Excellencies. We are sure that your great experience, both in the bilateral area as well as in international forums, will be a very valuable contribution to the work of our Conference.

I have two speakers on the list for today, the representatives of South Africa and Ukraine. The representative of South Africa, Ambassador Sipho Georges Nene, has the floor.

Mr. NENE (South Africa): Thank you for the kind words of welcome, Mr. President. It is a distinct pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament for the first time. Having arrived here three days ago, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and also to assure you of the continued support of my delegation in your efforts to finally resolve the outstanding issues on the programme of work for this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Conference of a decision taken by the South African Government, announced on 25 February 1999 by the Chairman of the South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee, the Hon. Minister Kader Asmal, that in accordance with the South African Government's policy on non-proliferation and arms control, that Committee decided that all redundant small arms in the possession of the South African Government be destroyed rather than sold on a tender basis as has been done previously.

Prior to this decision, more than 50 tons of firearms and 20 tons of ammunition that had been confiscated or deemed surplus had been destroyed by the South African Police Service since 1997. The decision to destroy all redundant small arms in future forms part of the South African Government's strategy to curtail the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms. It is my Government's view that the magnitude of the small arms problem is of such a nature that it can only be addressed through appropriate national, regional and international action.

I have circulated with this statement a copy of the statement by the Hon. Minister Asmal and request that the text of the statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. The representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Maimeskul, has the floor.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Mr. President, I have already had the opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament at a plenary meeting under your presidency. Let me again pledge the full support and cooperation of my delegation in your efforts to steer our multilateral forum to substantial negotiations this year.

(continued in French)

I would like to take this opportunity to wish a warm welcome to our new colleagues, the Ambassador of France, Mr. de La Fortelle, as well as Ambassador Nene from the Republic of South Africa.

(continued in English)

This first week of March is remarkable for solemn ceremonies and meetings commemorating the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In fact, the Landmine Ban Treaty, with its 65 ratifications and 134 States signatories, has become a part of international law faster than any major treaty in history.

As head of the Ukrainian delegation, I am proud to inform the Conference on Disarmament that my country signed the Ottawa Convention on 24 February this year, thus becoming its 132nd State signatory.

The signing of this important international legal instrument by Ukraine represents proof of our country's devotion to the high ideals of peace and humanity, a concrete contribution to the strengthening of international security and disarmament. Ukraine has always supported and shared the aspirations of the international community to achieve a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines (APLs). In September 1995, the Government of Ukraine introduced a moratorium on the export of all types of APLs. We actively participated in the work of the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which elaborated in 1995-1996 amended Protocol II, the so-called partial ban on APLs. This year amended Protocol II was submitted for ratification by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine. Thus Ukraine's joining the Ottawa Process is a logical step in the continuation of our policy on APLs, which was, in particular, confirmed by the destruction of over 100,000 landmines last May.

It is known that Ukraine was not among the first signatories to this Convention for some important reasons. First of all, this was due to the fact that the country has a large number of APLs in stockpiles which requires a lot of resources to begin their destruction and to complete the process, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, in four years. Accepting an obligation and being unable to fulfil it in time is against our major policy principles, our traditions and attitude towards international agreement.

In January 1999, a memorandum on mutually beneficial cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of Canada on the destruction of APLs stockpiled in our country was signed, according to which the Government

(Mr. Maimeskul, Ukraine)

of Canada expressed its readiness to provide Ukraine with relevant financial, material and technical assistance. To this end, Ukraine would welcome any assistance from the States parties, in accordance with article 6 of the Convention, in destroying the stockpiled mines.

On behalf of my State, I wish to welcome again the achievements of the Ottawa Process in the successful entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the start of its implementation. We welcome the newly established international legally binding norm on an APLs ban as a pivotal step towards a sustainable response to the global humanitarian crisis caused by their indiscriminate use in various parts of the world.

At the same time I share the opinion that the CD has a role to play in resolving the APL problem, and my delegation fully supports the common position of 22 States, which was presented by our colleague the distinguished Ambassador of Bulgaria, Mr. Petko Draganov, at the last plenary meeting.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine for his statement. That brings us to the end of the list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The representative of France, Ambassador de La Fortelle, has the floor.

Mr. de La FORTELLE (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, I simply wanted to thank you briefly for the warmth of your welcome and your very kind words concerning my South African colleague and myself. I am very touched. You were kind enough to say that we were experienced diplomats in multilateral and bilateral matters. I have indeed 32 years of experience in diplomacy, including several years at the International Atomic Energy Agency as a Governor, which I think will be useful to me in the coming years. I also wanted to say to you - and I can say this after having seen many French authorities in the past few weeks, before coming to Geneva - that my country views the Conference on Disarmament as a major body which has important tasks to accomplish, in the first place in the nuclear sphere, and France, as you know, seeks an effective start to negotiations on the substance of the cut-off, and therefore we hope that everyone will make an effort of imagination and goodwill, to break out of the present impasse. I think we will succeed, I hope, thanks to you in particular, the important work that you are doing In the nuclear sphere there is also a need to take a dynamic and forward-looking approach to maintaining the architecture of the Nuclear-Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is going to take up a substantial amount of our time this year and next year. But there are also other areas, and there too my country attaches great importance to the need to deal also with subjects which are quite indispensable, such as biological weapons, conventional disarmament, mines, which the Ambassador of Ukraine has just referred to, small arms, etc. So to move forward in all these areas, which my country considers very important, the keywords are realism, pragmatism, but also imagination and the resolve to strive together to move forward. With those few words, with great modesty because I have a lot to learn, I thank you once again for your welcome.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement and his kind words addressed to me.

(continued in Spanish)

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

As I said at the end of our last plenary meeting, the Chair has been holding intensive consultations at several levels in order to bring us closer to a solution acceptable to all concerning the items in the programme of work on which agreement has regrettably not yet been reached. As you know, we have made every effort to secure agreement, especially, for the time being, on how to examine, how to deal with the subject of nuclear disarmament in the Conference. The first conclusion I can draw from these consultations is the desire on all sides to adopt our programme of work as soon as possible in order to make a start on substantive consideration of the items on our agenda. Secondly, I have been able to observe that it is possible to find some middle ground in order to arrive at an acceptable compromise. I hope to prepare a proposal on the basis of all these consultations, on the basis of the conversations we have had, and also bearing in mind, of course, the documents we have before us. Once I have prepared this proposal, I will circulate it among you in order to continue consultations and enable us to finally adopt our programme. It only remains for me to seek your support and of course maximum flexibility that will enable us to move forward and finally adopt our programme.

As I have no further speakers, no other comments, I inform you that our next plenary meeting will take place on Thursday 11 March 1999 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.818
11 March 1999

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 11 March 1999, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Rodríguez Cedeño (Venezuela)

GE.99-60864 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 818th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of Algeria, Japan and China. In addition, before hearing the speakers on today's list, allow me, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a cordial welcome to the representatives of non-governmental organizations with us in the gallery today. As you know, International Women's Day was celebrated on 8 March last, and to mark this event, the Women and Peace Working Group of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women will, in accordance with established practice, address a message to the Conference. I am certain that the Conference joins me in conveying our best wishes to all women present in the room today and telling them how much we appreciate their steadfast commitment to peace, disarmament and the continuing interest they show in our work.

I should now like to call on the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who will read the statement addressed to the Conference by the Women and Peace Working Group.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): It is indeed a pleasure for me to convey the message to the Conference on Disarmament from the Women's Seminar to mark International Women's Day. The message reads as follows:

"Distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament,

"Once again women have gathered in Geneva in a seminar to mark 8 March, International Women's Day, which had its birth more than 140 years ago in a massive demand by women textile workers for better wages and working conditions. We have come together, as in previous years, to give expression to the demand of women worldwide for disarmament and peace.

"We, the participants in the women's seminar and the hundreds of thousands of women we represent in more than 15 countries, appreciate the opportunity to bring to you our reflections on some of the issues on the agenda of this Conference on Disarmament. We also have a need to convey to you our deep concern at the slowness of advancing this agenda, keeping the achievement of complete disarmament still as a distant goal.

"A year ago in March, the CD appointed a Special Coordinator under item 3, entitled 'Prevention of an arms race in outer space', to explore appropriate ways to deal with this question. Our women's seminar this year has specifically dealt with this topic. We consider that the work done by the Special Coordinator should be continued and built upon, and we strongly urge you to re-establish as quickly as possible the ad hoc committee with a view to negotiating measures to prevent outer space from being used for hostile military purposes and other strategic

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

advantages. We see outer space as an integral part of the common heritage of humankind. All scientific exploration and any other use of outer space should be for civilian research only with a view to furthering the well-being of humanity and not for the destruction of life and the environment.

"Also in August last year, the Conference on Disarmament established an ad hoc committee under item 1 of its agenda, to negotiate a 'non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices'. The ad hoc committee having been established late in its 1998 session could meet only twice. It recommended that the CD re-establish the ad hoc committee at the beginning of its 1999 session. Given that there is consensus to begin talks on a fissile material treaty, we trust that you will quickly establish an ad hoc committee and not lose negotiating time.

"It is our ardent hope that the treaty will be negotiated within the framework of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament should be made truly irreversible and we therefore believe that the treaty must address the question of the existing stocks.

"Again, a year ago this March, the Conference on Disarmament re-established the ad hoc committee under item 4, to 'negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons'. Since the ad hoc committee did not complete its work, it was recommended that the CD re-establish it at the beginning of its 1999 session. We strongly urge that this be done without delay.

"We are, of course, most deeply concerned that, overall, little progress is being made under item 1 of the CD's agenda, 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament'. The danger of a nuclear catastrophe remains great. A nuclear exchange can be set off by a misconception or an accident and obliterate all life on our globe within less than an hour's time. We therefore urge the Conference to take whatever possible steps that would at least lead to speedy de-alerting and de-activating of the existing nuclear arsenals. However, in the long run, complete nuclear disarmament under strict international control is the only future for humanity; de-alerting can be only one step on the road toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. We therefore express our sincere hope that this 1999 session will decide on a multilateral approach to nuclear disarmament negotiations.

"We recognize that the nuclear-weapon States have the main responsibility for freeing the world of nuclear weapons. It is incumbent on them to pursue with vigour negotiations on nuclear weapons reductions and bring them to a successful conclusion. However, we consider that it is time for non-nuclear-weapon States to be involved in

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

nuclear disarmament. A renunciation of first use of nuclear weapons and the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from non-nuclear-weapon States are urgently needed steps. The Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate place to pave the way for broadening the base for nuclear disarmament by creating the legal basis for such commitments. We believe these steps to be the needed signal for advancing the preparations for the NPT Review Conference in 2000.

"Last week the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction came into force. We applaud those countries who took the lead in bringing this treaty about and urge all those not yet party to it to ratify it without further delay, thus ensuring the universal application of the treaty.

"Finally, we wish to emphasize that in our view disarmament is a collective responsibility, a responsibility not only of governments, but also of every individual citizen. It will best be achieved in partnership and trust based on political will.

"In conclusion, thank you for the efforts you are making and we wish to assure you of our support for all steps you take on the way to nuclear, and general and complete disarmament."

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for reading the message from the NGO community on the occasion of International Women's Day. Before calling on the speakers on our list for today, I understand that the coordinators of the regional groups would like to take the floor. I first call on the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Amat Fores, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the member delegations of the Group of 21, I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for reading the message from the community of non-governmental organizations on the occasion of the holding of International Women's Day on 8 March last. Our Group, with which I associate myself, would also like to thank these non-governmental organizations for the broad support which they have consistently given to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and to acknowledge their valuable contributions to the cause of general and complete disarmament and, thereby, the achievement of international peace and security. In the Group of 21 we are deeply appreciative of the important role played by women in all walks of life, and particularly in the international movement for peace. Hence we are honoured to be able to congratulate all women in the world, who today represent over half the world's population. We extend these congratulations and thanks to all women belonging to non-governmental organizations for their statement today, which once again encourages us to

(Mr. Amat Forés, Cuba)

pursue our efforts to achieve a world free of all types of weapons, especially nuclear weapons. Our most sincere congratulations also go to the distinguished female colleagues who head or are part of delegations participating in the Conference on Disarmament, and those who, anonymously, from the interpretation booths or the secretariat, enable us to work and communicate. Woman is a natural nursery in which life is formed, bearer of the future and hope. By honouring we are honoured, and so today we ourselves are honoured by highly honouring women.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): On behalf of the Western Group, I wish to welcome the statement just read this morning by the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, on the occasion of International Women's Day. I extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Western Group, to the representatives of the women's international organizations who have joined us today in honour of this occasion.

The Western Group thanks the Women's Seminar for the views that have been submitted to the Conference for its consideration. It notes in particular the view of the Women's Seminar that disarmament remains a high priority for the international community, a priority which - and I quote from the statement - "will best be achieved in partnership and trust based on political will". The members of the Western Group welcome this message and will continue to do their best to contribute to the work of the CD in that spirit.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Let me, on behalf of the Eastern European Group and on my own behalf, say words of congratulation to the women attending this plenary meeting and express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who conveyed to us the message of the Working Group on "Women for Peace" on the occasion of International Women's Day.

We are grateful to the international women's organizations for their constant interest in our work and their invaluable moral support. The women of the whole world, without any doubt, have made and continue to make a substantial contribution to the cause of peace and disarmament.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, I am pleased to extend cordial greetings to the representatives of the women's international organizations, as well as to all women heads and members of delegations, secretariat staff and interpreters. We wish all of you good health, happiness and hope that our common efforts will make the world where we live more secure and safer for the benefit of all humanity.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): Last Monday was International Women's Day. On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to extend my greetings for the Day and my best regards to the female colleagues on each delegation, to the ladies present in the public gallery, and to the hard-working female staff of the secretariat. The Chinese delegation would like to welcome once again the presence of representatives of some women's

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organizations in the CD today and would like to thank them for their statement, which fully reflects the interest and support of the international women's community for the work of the CD.

Arms control and disarmament are matters of great importance to world peace and security. While immense changes are taking place in the world situation today, international disarmament efforts have made progress but are also confronted with a heavy task. Women around the world are working tirelessly in this field and are making an important contribution. Promoting international arms control and disarmament and enhancing international peace and security requires a collective effort by the international community, including the women in every country. The Beijing Declaration adopted at the 1995 World Fourth Conference on Women stated: "We are determined to take positive steps to ensure peace for the advancement of women and [recognize] the leading role that women have played in the peace movement". China encourages women around the world to redouble their efforts and make an even greater contribution to the lofty cause of promoting international disarmament and safeguarding world peace.

I would like to wish all the ladies present good health and good luck, for them and their families.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): The Algerian delegation is taking the floor for the first time in plenary this year and wishes first of all to extend to you, Mr. President, its warm congratulations on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament, and to say to you, at the moment when you are preparing to hand over to our colleague from Viet Nam, how much it appreciates the laudable efforts that you have constantly made to pull us out of the waiting period and get our work started. In this connection we wish to assure you of our full appreciation, as the representative of a friendly country with which Algeria launched an innovative project in 1980 to reduce poverty in this world - the Algerian-Venezuelan Development Bank project. Allow me also to say how highly we value the work done by your predecessor, Ambassador Grey of the United States of America, and at the same time to welcome our new colleagues to the Conference on Disarmament, which has seen its ranks swelled by 10 new ambassadors, 10 new sets of abilities that I am sure will be of great value for our collective thinking, and, with regard to the contribution made by the secretariat of the Conference, to express our gratitude to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General, whose wise counsel has been a veritable lifeline for us on many occasions.

We have just listened to the message conveyed to us by the NGO community on the occasion of International Women's Day, a message of profound humanity and remarkable commitment to the cause of disarmament. We appreciated it highly and extend our congratulations on the militant activity that the community has been waging to bring about general and complete disarmament. I can assure it that as far as the Algerian delegation is concerned, it is most receptive to these efforts and their political and moral underpinnings. The Conference on Disarmament would certainly be enhanced if it were to open

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itself more to civil society, as has already been done in other United Nations bodies, and to establish channels of communication and cooperation with that society in a permanent manner.

I must say that in these present times and the atmosphere prevailing among us it is difficult to make a statement without having to mention our programme of work for the current session, which we have not yet managed to draft in an integrated manner despite your own efforts and those of Ambassador Grey of the United States of America during his term of office. This is why I would like to share some thoughts with you on this issue.

First of all, there is a need for all of us to place the dynamics of our action in its proper context. The programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament is the interface through which we act every year in order to build the component elements of collective security for which we already have a paradigm, namely, the Decalogue of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In this connection, there is also a need, secondly, to recall that the scope of our decision on the programme of work, which, under the rules of procedure of our Conference, is adopted annually, should not prompt any fears of a fatal cumbersomeness in any of us. The limited time-frame of its legal validity - since it does not survive the end of the session - should encourage us all to display greater flexibility and therefore less rigidity.

What is more - if we have to give a third reason - the consensus that has already been extensively used, and sometimes misused, if I may be frank, is the best protection and the best safeguard for each of us, since it enables each delegation to oppose at any time any aspect of our negotiations or our work that it does not deem to be in keeping with the political interests and security imperatives of that country. Now the role of the programme of work, which when all is said and done is a set of mechanisms, is to pave the way for work whose outcome or success will depend on the convergence of views that has been achieved and ultimately the consensus thus obtained. That is why we must accept that the programme of work which is the outcome of our collective decision cannot be imbued with the definitive political or legal authority that some in the Conference on Disarmament seem to wish to ascribe to it.

For my delegation, our collective action should therefore, with flexibility and goodwill, lead us to the drafting of a programme of work for our present session. It should be possible for the programme to be balanced, practicable and, in that context, it should reflect the progress made last year without diminishing or obscuring the importance of each item it contains.

Lastly, there is a need to take into consideration the concerns and aspirations of all in a practical and tangible way. The programme of work, like any decision taken in the CD, is built through consensus, with the agreement of all: it cannot be drawn up in the absence of one group or another - still less by one group against another. We do indeed have differences of view, analysis and conception. We know this, but we also hold this system of argument and counter-argument very dear. This should not,

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however, prevent us from encouraging and provoking that small early-session movement which is the programme of work - a small movement that seems to defy the laws of physics in this room, since paradoxically it is the only movement which manages to create inertia in the Conference.

Having broached the question of our programme of work, we think it is also appropriate to refer to the question of nuclear disarmament, on which my delegation has taken the floor on many occasions at previous sessions. We consider nuclear disarmament as an objective, and there are many ways of reaching it. Some of them have already been devised, even if opinions vary as to their success or their impact: the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, the nuclear-weapon-free zones, the START process and unilateral initiatives that have been drawn to our attention here in the Conference on Disarmament. Other means have yet to be tried.

In this architecture, we already know that the fissile material ban is another element of the structure, and we would like to see it put into place rapidly. However, an insistent question arises very acutely, which we cannot sidestep. What should be done after fissile material? What should the Conference on Disarmament be able to do in this context and what measure should it consider and negotiate? Will this mean that agenda item 1 has been completed? Whatever the context for the consideration of this question, a reply must be given. This is the meaning that the Algerian delegation wanted to attach to the proposal it produced before the CD last July in document CD/1545, in part A, the elements of which are still valid, as are all the other, now numerous, proposals which have been produced by various groups and offer many avenues for reflection, rich and varied ideas for collective negotiation.

Following in the wake of this central question of subsequent measures in the field of nuclear disarmament, other questions deserve our attention, which are also important. First of all, is there complementarity or antagonism between the bilateral process of nuclear disarmament and the multilateral process? Up to now there has been complementarity - witness the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the forthcoming talks on fissile material, both carried out at the multilateral level. We could say that for the future, matters could not be arranged otherwise, as long as we jointly identify the subsequent measures in the most responsible manner. The question deserves to be raised and an answer can be given.

Next, what is the role of nuclear weapons today after the end of the cold war and what might be their future place in the regime of collective security? What will be their use as elements of power, and their uselessness or their lack of use in terms of safeguarding peace and banishing the spectre of apocalyptic wars, since the concept of bipolar deterrence is no longer operational?

This leads use to question the foundations and profiles of current military doctrines. Is deterrence, as a central element in the effort to

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legitimize the possession of nuclear weapons, still valid? If so, what entities or what threats or what potential threats is it designed to contain? And in what circumstances?

These are substantive questions, crucial concerns in our view - highly political, it is true, because they encompass genuine parameters of security, but we firmly believe they must be given serious and thorough consideration.

In this chapter on nuclear disarmament, important negotiations await us and every delegation here recognizes that they will be arduous and difficult: I refer to the negotiations related to fissile material. My country, which is solemnly and legally committed to the peaceful use of the atom, attaches great importance to this. My delegation will set out its views on this issue in detail in the ad hoc committee which we are expecting to be re-established, but I can say now that it will ensure recognition of the need to make these negotiations a combined measure of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In this connection, the question of stocks must not only be tackled, but must also be enshrined one way or another in the future treaty. Here too, I would like to remind you that the dual proposal made by Algeria in July 1998 addresses the question of fissile material. The Algerian delegation may draw on the elements contained in it depending on progress in the negotiations, which, if not at the outset, at least as soon as possible, should settle the question of the scope and the objectives of the treaty to be negotiated.

We are familiar with the arguments put forward here to limit the scope of the future treaty to future production. We also know the arguments adduced for including stocks, to which my delegation subscribes. Incidentally, what do we mean by stocks? What content should be given to what are called "stocks" and "surplus stocks"? And in that case, what would be the content of so-called "usable" stocks that are claimed to be necessary for maintaining nuclear-weapon systems? What guarantees should apply? The answers are not a priori easy to provide because of the opposition raised to the inclusion of stocks, but also because of the complexity of the political and security parameters that are connected to the question of the asymmetry of these stocks. We need to give thought to this concept of stocks, to define it first of all, then to establish the semantic parameters, and lastly to define the way in which this will be taken into account in the future treaty. My delegation will make its contribution to this work when it starts, and will make every effort in a constructive way to ensure that the future treaty possesses this added value, thanks to the inclusion of stocks, without which it would be no more than a non-proliferation instrument.

I cannot conclude without indicating that the Algerian delegation continues to favour the re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on security assurances, which should embark on a negotiating phase, and the extension of the consultation mechanisms agreed on last year on the issues of reform of the CD, anti-personnel mines, transparency and outer space, which, in our view, should benefit this year from the establishment of an ad hoc committee.

Lastly, I would like to restate the full support of my delegation for the immediate admission of the five countries that appear in

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Ambassador Hofer's report: Ecuador, Tunisia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Ireland. Algeria, which endorses the Non-Aligned principle for the democratization of international relations and organizations, supports an immediate decision on this subject, and also calls for the opening of the CD to any State that expresses a wish to be a full member. The CD's character as a negotiating body would not suffer thereby provided that the rules of procedure and the arrangements for conducting and handling our negotiations were revised accordingly. It goes without saying that we would all gain greater representativeness and greater legitimacy.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair and to my country. I give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Hayashi.

Mr. HAYASHI (Japan): Mr. President, as this is the first time for me to take the floor in this year's session of the Conference, first of all, I would like to express my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the post of the President of the Conference on Disarmament. The tasks before us have important significance for the work of this year and the immediate years to follow, and I wish to express also the appreciation of my delegation for what you have done under your presidency for the progress of the work of the CD.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the efforts made by your predecessor, Ambassador Robert Grey of the United States of America, and also to pay tribute to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky as well as to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and their staff for their efficiency in facilitating the work of the Conference. Let me warmly welcome our new colleagues who have recently joined us.

It is also my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the representatives of the women's international organizations who are present today and thank them for their interest in and support of the work of the CD.

Today I would like to focus on three subjects, i.e. nuclear disarmament, the FMCT and small arms. However, it should not be construed that other subjects are not important to my delegation.

The turn of events since last year have undoubtedly brought back the issue of nuclear weapons to the centre stage of the world after a few years of relaxation, negligence and even a hint of complacency.

The outcome of these events is most vividly reflected in the state of health of the single most important and most universal legal embodiment of human aspiration - the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty - which was indefinitely extended in 1995. The indefinite extension was made possible because the treaty embraced an aspiration of humankind for nuclear disarmament as clearly as it codified the commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. Thus, the treaty became the cornerstone both of nuclear disarmament and of non-proliferation. The significant tenet of the treaty remains that it obliges the nuclear-weapon States to pursue negotiations on nuclear

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disarmament as unequivocally as it obliges the non-nuclear-weapon States not to acquire nuclear weapons. This collective brainchild of the late twentieth century needs constant tending and nurturing since the state of its health at this moment is far from excellent.

Then how can we fulfil our responsibility of parenthood? The only way is to be attentive to all the aspects that this treaty embodies.

Last year, the disappointing results of the Second PrepCom for the year 2000 Review Conference turned out to be only a prelude to the psychological shock wave as well as the physical seismic wave that emanated from the nuclear testing in South Asia in May 1998.

It is thus urgently needed to consolidate the NPT regime. It is simply not enough to engage in rhetorical emphasis on the importance of the NPT. We have to rear it as a living being and keep breathing vigour into it. The only way to do this is to keep making conscious collective efforts for nuclear disarmament.

Clearly, the START process constitutes the central pillar of such efforts and will remain so for some time to come. The process has been conducted between the two major nuclear-weapon States, but it is not entirely a bilateral business. The outcome of the process has a significant consequence and impact on the whole world. Moreover, the process surely has an aspect of fulfilling the multilateral legal obligations under the NPT.

My delegation also believes that the obligations of the three smaller nuclear-weapon States to pursue nuclear disarmament are not conditional upon the pace and extent of reductions on the part of the two bigger nuclear-weapon States. The three are equally and without condition obliged under the NPT as the other two are. As my Government proposed at last year's PrepCom of the NPT Review Conference, it is only reasonable to expect that the three smaller nuclear-weapon States at least commit themselves to not increasing their existing nuclear arsenals before they are fully engaged within the framework of the five.

As I mentioned earlier, the reduction of nuclear arsenals has been and will be for some time the domain of the bilateral and possibly the plurilateral process among the nuclear-weapon States. But it is inconceivable that multilateral discussions on nuclear disarmament could in any way obstruct these processes.

If we look back, we can see an impressive record of achievements based on multilateral discussions and negotiations, including most recently the CTBT. If we look forward, all the States, including the nuclear-weapon States, are committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons and will undoubtedly have a long journey to make before reaching that goal. The FMCT negotiations are the agreed next step on a multilateral front. But it is bound to be such a long journey that there must be room for further multilateral efforts.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

Having agreed on our goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons, it is only logical to try to identify the next multilateral steps beyond the FMCT negotiations. It is regrettable that the nuclear-weapon States, reluctant to make any attempt to discuss nuclear disarmament, help create suspicion about the seriousness of their commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

My Government has been tabling a draft resolution on the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly since 1994. In last year's resolution, we tried to introduce new elements in order to prescribe actions that needed to be pursued for the advancement of nuclear disarmament. These included: (a) "multilateral discussions on possible future steps for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation"; and (b) "further efforts by the five nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally and through their negotiations". The resolution was adopted with the support of the overwhelming majority of the United Nations Member States, including all the nuclear-weapon States.

We recognize that the CD is instrumental in responding to what the resolution stipulated. In fact, the CD has a variety of proposals related to mechanisms and mandates for such discussions. Among them, the proposals made by Canada and South Africa are in line with our thinking expressed in the resolution. The five NATO countries seem to propose to modestly start by providing a mechanism to study ways and means of establishing an exchange of information and views within the Conference on endeavours towards nuclear disarmament. It would be a meaningful approach as the very first step toward more substantive discussions.

With regard to the Troika consultations, I consider it in principle a useful intermediate measure in the process of establishing a more formal and structured mechanism for nuclear disarmament discussions. Nevertheless, clear results of such consultations have not yet been observed despite the efforts made by the successive Presidents. In this regard, I would like to stress the necessity of strengthening those consultations by increasing the frequency of the meetings, enhancing the profile, providing more transparency, giving a clear purpose and focus to each session, and producing regular reports.

The aim of the Troika consultations is obviously to find an eventual consensus on an appropriate mechanism for nuclear disarmament discussions. Alternatively, we may make use of the Troika consultations as an instrument for substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament, with or without changes to its mandate.

As you may recall, my delegation made a proposal for a Special Coordinator in 1997. Because my delegation is more interested in commencing the work of the CD and making progress than placing our national flag on one of the proposals, let me just remind the floor that the proposal still exists and could be called upon as a means to find consensus on a mechanism and a mandate for nuclear disarmament discussions in the CD.

I would now like to move on to the FMCT negotiations. We believe that an FMCT is significant both for nuclear disarmament and for non-proliferation.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

Even though an FMCT alone cannot automatically assure the reduction of nuclear arsenals, it will nevertheless contribute to nuclear disarmament in two ways. It can at least constrain the nuclear-weapon States or any State from producing fissile materials for nuclear weapons. In addition, the FMCT could be yet another stepping stone in our advancement toward the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

Let me briefly set out the important principles that my Government attaches to the FMCT negotiations.

First of all: "universality". In order for the international community to fully appreciate the value of the treaty, it needs to be universally adhered to, including by those States that are capable of producing nuclear weapons.

Second: "non-discrimination". The treaty should not create a legal regime which introduces a distinction between the nuclear-weapon States parties and the other States parties to the FMCT in terms of the rights and obligations of the treaty as such. But should we stop there in terms of non-discrimination? If the FMCT introduces safeguard mechanisms short of the full-scope safeguards provided for by the NPT regime, the treaty is likely to create actual differences among States parties to the FMCT, including a difference in verification measures at a certain kind of facility, depending on whether they are situated in the States where safeguards in accordance with the NPT are applied and the other States. This is a difficult issue, and my delegation needs more time to propose a solution. In any case, we should face this problem within the FMCT negotiations or in a longer time-frame.

Third: "cost-effectiveness". The cost of verification under the FMCT must be commensurate to what we could realistically expect out of the entire regime of the FMCT with its limitations. In other words, we should not seek perfection without regard to its cost. In this respect, it is also important to fully utilize the accumulated knowledge and expertise of IAEA.

Fourth: "no restriction on the peaceful use of nuclear energy". My delegation believes that the FMCT would in no way affect the peaceful use of nuclear energy and understands that this view is shared among the CD members.

Fifth: "existing stocks". This issue must be addressed either in parallel with the current FMCT negotiations or on a stage-by-stage basis.

It is often said that being too ambitious in our negotiations on the FMCT will only complicate the matter and delay its conclusion. In this assertion, it was pointed out that even codifying the ban on the future production of fissile materials with focused verification measures would be a major step forward. I am not opposing this assertion entirely, because there is a sobering truth in it. However, I have some doubts if that means that all the controversial issues should be out of the purview of the negotiations.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

If such a "minimalist" approach is the only possible choice for the CD, I wonder why we are investing so much time and energy in the multilateral negotiation of such a treaty.

Finally, I would like to briefly touch upon the issue of small arms which was raised in several statements made earlier in this session, especially by the distinguished colleagues of Canada, Norway, Austria and South Africa. On behalf of my Government, I would like to pay tribute to the great interest shown by their Governments on this issue.

In the field of small arms, there are numerous ongoing initiatives and activities organized by international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, UNDP, OAS and the EU, many national governments, including my own, and several non-governmental organizations. My Government believes that in view of the enormity of the issue, the United Nations should take the lead and play the central role.

The United Nations panel of governmental experts, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Donowaki, submitted its report to the Secretary-General in 1997 containing the panel's recommendations on reduction measures as well as prevention measures in order to tackle the problem of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and the transfer of small arms. Based upon this report, the Secretary-General established a new group of governmental experts on small arms in 1998 to consider: (a) the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the report on small arms; and (b) further actions recommended to be taken. The experts' group was further given an additional mandate with the United Nations resolution. This additional mandate is to consider recommendations regarding an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects to be held not later than 2001.

In this regard, I would like to commend the Swiss Government for having offered Geneva to host this conference. The group of governmental experts met again two weeks ago in Geneva for its second session, immediately after the very useful workshop on small arms hosted by the Swiss Government. The group will probably meet again in May in Tokyo at the invitation of my Government and will then finally meet again in July before submitting their report to the Secretary-General. If the group is not given a further mandate, it will be able to complete the task with the submission of the report this year. Thereafter, it will be up to us to decide what we will do to implement the recommendation. At that stage, the CD will naturally be one of the forums through which we could possibly try to implement the recommendations, as the distinguished Ambassadors of Canada and Austria mentioned the possibility of the Conference on Disarmament taking up the issue of small arms. My delegation shares the same thought and finds the suggestion that the CD take up a code of conduct on arms transfers a useful one to start discussions.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the urgency to start substantive discussions by adopting the programme of work for 1999. I fully understand that priorities or emphases are not identical among the CD members and that there will be no magic formula to make everybody 100 per cent happy. But we

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

are all aware that the continuation of the present impasse will only discredit the CD as a body and equally shame every one of us. I sincerely hope that this awareness will be translated into some degree of flexibility for a compromise. As far as my delegation is concerned, it is ready to be flexible in order to start concrete work in this part of the session.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Japan for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Li.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr President, at the outset the Chinese delegation would like to express its appreciation of your relentless efforts to formulate this year's programme of work for the CD. During the past few weeks we have had repeated consultations, and your patience and diligence in carrying out your responsibilities have earned you everyone's admiration.

Concerning the working mechanism under agenda item 3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", consultations are yet to take place. The Chinese delegation would like to put forward a specific proposal to be considered in future consultations.

China has always attached great importance to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I expounded China's views and positions on this matter in the CD plenary on 13 August last year and 11 February this year. Given that in recent years the countries concerned have been intensifying their efforts to develop and test space-based weapons and weapon systems, and in particular in view of the latest disturbing developments, preventing an arms race in outer space has become more present and pressing. China believes that the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, should take concrete action in this regard, re-establishing an ad hoc committee to negotiate an international legal instrument preventing an arms race in outer space.

I therefore put forward the following proposal on the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee and its mandate under agenda item 3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

"1. The Conference on Disarmament decides to re-establish, under item 3 of its agenda, entitled 'Prevention of an arms race in outer space', an ad hoc committee to negotiate the conclusion of an international legal instrument banning the testing, deployment and use of any weapons, weapon systems or components thereof in outer space, with a view to preventing the weaponization of outer space.

"2. The ad hoc committee shall, in carrying out its mandate, take into consideration all relevant proposals, present and future; it shall report to the Conference on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1999 session."

(Mr. Li, China)

My delegation requests that this proposal be circulated as an official CD document. We are ready to listen to the views and positions of all parties and make joint efforts to promote substantive progress on this subject.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of China for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): First of all, I would like to join and endorse the statement which was made by the distinguished Ambassador of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 21 on the occasion of International Women's Day. We also welcome the programme of measures for nuclear disarmament which the women's seminar has proposed.

In this context, let me note the call for nuclear disarmament which has just been made by the distinguished Ambassador of Japan, who has referred to the collective parenthood of the NPT. While not questioning the paternity of this treaty, much less its legitimacy, let me also recall that the call for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework was espoused most strongly in our midst by one of our former lady colleagues, and it is our hope that one day, perhaps, there will be a majority of lady heads of delegation within the CD, and that call for a time-bound framework for the elimination of nuclear weapons may receive the endorsement of the international community.

I have asked for the floor to refer to the item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. My delegation outlined its substantive position on this item in its statement of 25 February. We believe that the recent developments which have taken place have accorded special importance to action by the Conference on Disarmament on this issue. Our major areas of concern have been outlined in our statement: strategic confrontation between the major Powers, the possibility of the revival of an arms race in outer space and on the ground, and the destabilization of deterrence and stability in several regions of the world, including a nuclearized South Asia. Therefore, we believe that prevention is better than cure, and the creation of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed acute urgency.

The Group of 21 has proposed the creation of such an ad hoc committee in document CD/1570 of 4 February. Pakistan therefore fully supports the proposal which has been made today by the distinguished Ambassador of China to establish an ad hoc committee under item 3, which shall "negotiate the conclusion of an international legal instrument banning the testing, deployment and use of any weapons, weapon systems or components thereof in outer space, with a view to preventing the weaponization of outer space". We believe that this proposal can serve as the basis for an acceptable mandate for an ad hoc committee on this item.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your wise leadership and your diligent and

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

objective endeavours since you assumed the presidency of the conference in an attempt to further the work of the Conference within the framework of the agreed work programme. Therefore I pay tribute to you and to Ambassador Grey, your predecessor, for his efforts in this regard. I take this opportunity to greet our new colleagues who have recently joined the CD family and wish to express my delegation's intention to cooperate closely with them. Finally, I wish to greet the Ambassador of France, whom I kindly request to convey to our colleague, Mrs. Joëlle Bourgois, my sincere appreciation for her kind words in my regard in a meeting at which I was not present.

Having heard the statement made by Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, concerning the statement prepared by the non-governmental organizations on the occasion of the celebration of International Women's Day, I wish to pay tribute to Mr. Petrovsky for his statement and emphasize the importance of women's participation not only in furthering social development and rearing the future generations that will continue and complete the course of human progress but also in the field of disarmament and the achievement of security and stability throughout the word. We could appropriately recall the dictum: "Paradise is at the feet of mothers".

Yesterday I attended the seminar organized as part of the celebration of International Women's Day on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I was deeply impressed by the activities that women are undertaking in this field, which for so long has been a focal point of concern to us and constituted one of the reasons which prompted Egypt, in cooperation with the delegation of Sri Lanka at the United Nations, to propose a draft resolution concerning the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This resolution, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its last session, is contained in document 53/76. In fact, that was one of the reasons underlying or request for the establishment of a committee within the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This committee was actually established, on the initiative and with the support of the delegation of Egypt, in the Conference on Disarmament in 1985 and continued its work until its mandate expired. We are now requesting that this Committee be re-established in order to resume its work which was suspended a few years ago. Accordingly, you will find that the programme of work submitted by the Group of 21, which you will find in document CD/1570, makes provision for the re-establishment of this Committee with a specific mandate.

In this respect, the Egyptian delegation fully endorses the proposal put forward by the Chinese delegation on the re-establishment of this Committee with the mandate outlined in the statement before this Conference by His Excellency the distinguished Ambassador of China, which is fully in line with the resolution that was adopted by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, that is to say resolution 53/76 of the last session. However, this must not be understood as being the highest priority for us, because our highest priority, as indicated in the statement that the Egyptian delegation made before this Conference on 26 January during this session, is

(Mr. Zahran, Egy

nuclear disarmament and the establishment of a committee on this subject in the Conference on Disarmament, in addition, of course, to the other committe that we agreed to establish in the Conference on Disarmament last year to address the question of the ban on the production of fissile material. This should be clearly understood.

In this connection, I would like to pay tribute to the positive contribution made by the non-governmental organizations in this respect, whi lends further weight to our repeated requests, most recently on 26 January, that the Conference should confer observer status on the non-governmental organizations in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The latest statement made by Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, gave an additional indication that we were right to request observer status for non-governmental organizations in this Conference in recognition of the valuable contributions that they are making in the field of disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. We have come to the end of the list of speakers. I would like to know whether any delegation would like to take the floor. If not, I would like to make a number of final comments on the work done during this period, during which I had the honour to preside over the work of the Conference

As you know, from the outset, and despite the efforts made earlier by m predecessor Ambassador Grey of the United States, we had to focus our entire attention on the adoption of the programme of work of the Conference, which w deem essential to be able to begin the substantive consideration of the items on the agenda already agreed. As you will recall, we had before us several proposals, some of them related to the programme as a whole, such as those submitted separately by the Group of 21 and by my predecessor in the Chair, and some other specific ones on certain points, in particular nuclear disarmament, submitted by individual delegations and by groups of countries. On this basis we began very wide-ranging and transparent consultations with delegations individually and with groups of countries, all for the purpose of finding the common ground, that necessary middle ground, that would serve as basis for drawing up a consensus formula.

From these consultations we were able to conclude, firstly, that there was a substantial measure of agreement, in general terms, on the programme, except as far as two specific issues are concerned, relating in particular to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, specifically the way in which the Conference could consider these issues. As I said at the last plenary meeting, the initial consultations also reflected the general interest in moving forward in our work and adopting the programme of work as soon as possible, in order to address questions of substance, for which the need was always recognized to show the greatest possible flexibilit in the positions of countries individually and in groups. Regrettably, we also observed that this flexibility, though sizeable, was insufficient to arrive at the agreement which we have been hoping to achieve over these past weeks. We are aware that the political will to make progress in our work mus

(The President)

be based on flexibility, but real flexibility, and, I would venture to add, flexibility on an equal footing, in the sense that efforts should be balanced, which is inherent in any negotiating process. As long as balanced concessions are not achieved, we will continue to encounter difficulties in achieving a formula acceptable to all.

At the end of the consultations, bearing in mind not only the proposals formally submitted to the Conference but also all the opinions expressed, I decided to draw up a text which we circulated informally first, for the consideration of the various groups, and now officially (CD/1575), in order to achieve a basis for compromise as soon as possible. The proposal I took the initiative of putting before you for your consideration, on which regrettably there has been no agreement, is in my opinion a balanced text from various standpoints. The initial proposals, as you may recall, related to the creation of specific bodies, of different ranks, and also with different mandates, to consider issues related to nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space. Focusing on these two matters, on which, as I said before, there were and continue to be serious divergences, we submitted in our proposal two intermediate formulas that could be placed at the centre of the aspirations of the various countries and groups.

As for nuclear disarmament in particular, referred to in paragraph 3, we attempted to draw up a balanced formula as regards the body and the mandate, which in my opinion are the two constituent elements of the mechanism to consider the item in the Conference. Firstly, the body which we are endeavouring to set up, an ad hoc working group, falls in the middle ground between an ad hoc committee and the Troika created last year. The body, however - I must reiterate this - is not in my mind as important as the mandate, to which the second part of this first paragraph of section 3 of the proposal refers. This mandate - and here there is a second effort to seek balance - is also to be found in a common or intermediate space where we can clearly identify the phases of exchange of information and views and a possible negotiating phase. It is the mandate, to our mind, which enables the body to be described as a deliberative or negotiating body, which stands at the very heart of the differences expressed. The mandate proposed in this paragraph 3 makes provision for the two phases in an equally balanced manner, a deliberative body and a negotiating body in a second phase.

As for the item relating to prevention of an arms race in outer space, mentioned in paragraph 4 of the proposal, an equally moderate and intermediate mechanism is presented that could enable us to make progress in the handling of the item with a view to achieving consensus enabling us to arrive at an agreement on the mandate for an ad hoc committee. The two mechanisms we have taken the initiative of proposing reflect, in addition to what we consider to be this middle ground, important progress as regards the handling of these two issues by the Conference, which corresponds to the general interest that the decisions adopted in the Conference should not detract from earlier agreements and achievements.

The situation of deadlock in which the Conference finds itself now in connection with procedural or organizational issues, which, it is true, have a

(The President)

very important relationship to the substantive consideration of the topics falling within the competence of the Conference, regrettably have a negative impact on its credibility, in which the internatical community has vested its confidence so that it will consider issues of disarmament and nuclear disarmament in particular. I think that the consultations and negotiations on our programme of work should be continued and intensified in order to adopt a decision as soon as possible, for which we require the greatest political will and, of course, a show of clear and positive flexibility.

To conclude, I should like to draw your attention to an issue which should be solved as soon as possible: the expansion of the Conference and the admission of new members. There is a majority favourable opinion that should serve as a basis for the adoption of a definitive decision on this issue, in the immediate future.

I do not wish to conclude these brief final considerations without wishing the new President, my friend and neighbour Ambassador Nguyen Quy Binh of Viet Nam, the greatest success in this delicate and complex task, and to express my greatest gratitude to all of you for the support you gave me, especially the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the very efficient staff of the secretariat for the assistance they have given me at all times during these past weeks.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 18 March 1999, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.